THE FALSE NOTION OF A *Chriſtian Prieſthood*, AND THE PRETENCES TO Sacerdotal OBLATION, INTERCESSION, BENEDICTION, and Authoritative ABSOLUTION.

Examined and Confuted:

BEING

An Anſwer to Mr. *Law*'s Second Letter to the Biſhop of *Bangor*.

In a LETTER to a Friend.

By PHILELEUTHERUS CANTABRIGIENSIS.

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THE NOTION OF A *Chriſtian Prieſthood*, &c.

SIR,

'TIS not only the natural *Right*, but the *Duty* of every Man, to *direct* his Judgment and Belief by the apparent Evidence of Things; and therefore every Man not only *may*, but is *obliged* to *examine* into the Evidence of Things.

No Man ought to be obliged to diſſemble or be an Hypocrite; and therefore no Man ought to be hindred from *declaring* the Reſult of his Examination, and *profeſſing* what he Judges and Believes to be true, ſo long as he injures no Man: This will juſtifie me in owning what you have heard to be true, that I am not afraid to *declare* openly in this Place, notwithſtanding all Diſcouragements,

what I Judge and Believe to be true; that what the Biſhop of *Bangor* in the Controverſy at preſent on Foot maintains concerning Church-Authority and Power, is the Doctrine of the Goſpel.

THE Reaſons why I ſo *Judge* and *Believe*, are contained in the following Remarks on a Performance very much celebrated here, *viz.* Mr. *Law*'s ſecond Letter to the Biſhop of *Bangor*.

I SHALL begin with premiſing ſomething in *General* concerning the grand *Miſtake* on which all Mr. *Law's Errors* are founded; which is his Notion of a Chriſtian * *Prieſthood*, and of the † *Sacerdotal Powers* of the Chriſtian Clergy.

FOR in Chriſtianity there is no *Prieſt* but Chriſt alone; nor any *Prieſthood*, ſtrictly and properly ſpeaking, or *Sacerdotal* Powers of *Oblation*, *Interceſſion* or *Benediction* in any Men upon Earth.

CHRISTIANS have but one *Prieſt*, even that High-Prieſt, who having *offered* himſelf a Sacrifice *once for all* for the Sins of the World, is for ever ſat down at the Right-hand of God to make *Interceſſion* for them, and *Bleſs* them with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in Heavenly Things.

TO ſupport this Aſſertion, I ſhall,

1. ENDEAVOUR in ſome ſhort Propoſitions to comprize the Senſe of Scripture, and particularly of the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* concerning Chriſt's *Sacerdotal* Office, and ſhew in each Branch of it, that it cannot be executed by any Men upon Earth.

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* *He inſiſts on ſacerdotal Benedictions and Prayers*, p. 16, 17, 34.

† *Sacerdotal Powers*, p. 23, 24, 28. *Prieſtly Office*, p. 86, 92. *Sacerdotal Office*, p. 92. *Prieſthood*, p. 28, 29, 31, 33, 98, 99, *&c.*

2. I

2. I SHALL shew that under the Name of *Sacerdotal* Powers, some Men have usurped not only Christ's *Sacerdotal*, but also his *Regal* Office.

3. I SHALL shew that Men came first to pretend to *such* Powers, and still defend their Pretences, by confounding the Notions of *Legal Sacrificers* and *Christian Ministers*, which, till the Mistakes and Artifices of Men thus blended them, were as different as Light and Darkness.

First, I AM to shew the Sense of Scripture concerning Christ's Sacerdotal Office.

THE Author to the *Hebrews* has treated much more fully on that Topick, than any other inspired Writer. 'Tis his Design in that Epistle to engage the *Jewish* Converts to continue in the Profession of Christianity, and not to be terrified with Persecution, or the vain Words of Excommunication and Exclusion from the Benefits of an external Worship and Communion; but without Fear of Man's Judgment to adhere to their great Lord and Law-giver, and have a close and immediate Regard to him.

ONE of the greatest Motives used to engage them to such Perseverance, is their having Christ for their great High-Priest, who had offered himself for their Sins, and now in Heaven interceded for them *effectually* to the *Remission* of their Sins, however Men might terrifie them as if they were *retained* for not being or continuing in a Method of external Worship abolished by Christ.

HE was a High Priest who was sensible of their Infirmities, and by undergoing all the Sufferings their frail Nature was exposed to, had set them an Example and shewn they might be born; and by

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the Power he was exalted to, was as able as he was willing to aſſiſt his Subjects in all their Difficulties: And therefore in all their Diſtreſſes they ought to apply themſelves to the Throne of Grace, in full Aſſurance of effectual Aſſiſtance from God through his Interceſſion.

THIS Motive begins to be treated of, *chap.* iv. 14. and the Mention of Jeſus as a *High-Prieſt*, naturally led the Writer to diſcourſe of his *Prieſthood*, which was the Accompliſhment of the *Typical Prieſthood* under the Law; of his *Sacrifice*, which was the Accompliſhment of all the *Legal Sacrifices*: After which, the Subſtance being now come, the Types were to ceaſe, and there was to be no more Prieſt or Sacrifice.

THE Types were not able to take away Sin, which was only to be done effectually by the one Sacrifice of Chriſt once offered, and never to be repeated, after which there was to be no more Sacrifice for Sin. Thus it was neceſſary to teach the Converts; to whom the unconverted *Jews* continually objected, that the Legal Sacrifices being the means of Remiſſion of Sins appointed by God himſelf, without them they could have no Hope of Pardon.

AFTER having fully treated of Chriſt's Prieſthood, the Author returns, *ch.* x. 19. to the Subject from which he had digreſſed, repeats his Exhortation, and reinforces the Motive to Perſeverance, from Chriſt's Prieſthood, which had occaſioned this Digreſſion.

THEN, *v.* 26. He goes on to encourage them to Perſeverance, by ſhewing the Danger of Apoſtacy; that if they relied not on this All-ſufficient

Sacrifice

Sacrifice of Chriſt, no others could profit them. And afterwards proceeds to other Motives, as the Nature of Faith, the Examples of Men famous for it, *&c.* Carefully peruſe theſe 7 Chapters, and then judge whether in the Diſcourſe on Chriſt's Prieſthood contained in them, and other Places of Scripture which I ſhall refer to, compared with them, the following Propoſitions are not expreſsly or by neceſſary Conſequence contained.

I. THE Prieſtly Office conſiſts in miniſtring for Men in Things pertaining to God, in offering Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins, v. 1. viii. 3. 4. and thereby atoning, expiating and making Reconciliation for the Sins of the People.

II. To this Office belong Interceſſion and Mediation, to go between God and Man, to Intercede for Man, vii. 25. viii. 6. ix. 24. compare *Rom.* viii. 34. 1 *John* ii. 1.

III. BENEDICTION or Bleſſing the People in the Name of God, belongs alſo to the Prieſtly Office. vii. 7, 8. compare *Numb.* vi. 22. *Levit.* ix. 22. *Deut.* xxi. 5.

IV. THE Qualifications for this Office are, firſt, Divine Appointment. v. 4, 5.

V. SECONDLY, Sympathizing with the Infirmities of the People. iv. 15. v. 2.

VI. BUT theſe two Qualifications were not ſufficient to render the Miniſtration of a Prieſt effectual; for the legal Sacrifices and Prieſtly Miniſtrations could not make the Comers thereunto Perfect,

fect, ix. 9. x. 1, 4. or take away the Guilt of Sins, x. 11. they had no Effect to purifie the Conſcience, but only the Fleſh, ix. 9, 13, 14.

VII. The Reaſons of this, were *firſt*, Want of ſinleſs Perfection in thoſe that Officiated, vii. 26, 27, 28.

VIII. And *Secondly*, Want of any Efficacy in the Thing Sacrificed; the Blood of Calves and of Goats had no Efficacy to take away Sin. ix. 12.

IX. These were but Types of the only ſufficient Sacrifice of Chriſt. ix. 23. x. 1. viii. 5.

X. The Sacrifice of Chriſt once offered puts away Sin, i. 3. ix. 26. x. 10. obtains *Eternal* Redemption for us, ix. 12. and hath perfected *for ever* them that are ſanctified, x. 14.

XI. The Qualifications requiſite for offering ſo effectual a Sacrifice, which the legal High Prieſt wanted and Chriſt had, were *firſt*, To be without Sin. vii. 26, 27, 28. See *Prop.* vii.

XII. And *Secondly*, To have ſomething better to offer than the legal Sacrifices, ix. 23, which might affect the Conſcience of the Worſhippers. See *Prop.* viii. For,

XIII. The Reaſon why Chriſt's Sacrifice is ſo effectual is, becauſe he who was himſelf without Sin, v. 7. 9. offered up himſelf for our Sins, ix. 28. He as Prieſt was Holy, Harmleſs, *&c.* vii. 26. And he had his own Blood to offer, a better Sacrifice than the legal Ones, viii. 3. ix. 15. *comp.* 1 *Pet.* ii. 24.

XIV. The

XIV. The Reaſon why Chriſt's Blood was better than the legal Sacrifices, is becauſe the Blood of him who without Spot offered himſelf thro' the Eternal Spirit to God, *purgeth our Conſciences* from dead Works to ſerve the living God, ix. 14. x. 22. See *Prop.* viii. and xii.

XV. Where Remiſſion of Sins is, there is no more Sacrifice for Sin, x. 2, 3, 17, 26.

XVI. But the Sacrifice of Chriſt for ever puts away Sin by *Prop.* x. no other can be of any Efficacy x. 26. See *Prop.* xiv. Nor is the Sacrifice of Chriſt to be repeated ix. 25, 26. Therefore in the Chriſtian Diſpenſation there is no more Offering for Sin. But,

XVII. It is neceſſary that he who is a Prieſt, ſhould have ſomething to offer, viii. 3.

XVIII. Conſequently there is no Prieſt in the Chriſtian diſpenſation, who can perform the *firſt* Branch of the *Sacerdotal* Office, *Oblation*, or offer Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins.

XIX. This further appears becauſe no Man is qualified by ſinleſs Perfection; ſee *Prop.* vii. and xi. or Divine Appointment. See *Prop.* iv.

XX. Moreover, Chriſt's Prieſthood is ἀπαράβατος, *that doth not deſcend from one to another*, (as it is rightly in the Margin of our Bible) he hath no Succeſſor in it, vii. 24. But is a Prieſt for ever.

XXI. Nor is there any Man on Earth who can execute the *ſecond* branch of the *Sacerdotal* Office, or *Intercede* to God for Man as a Prieſt.

XXII. Because no Man is entred into the true Sanctuary but Christ who is passed into the Heavens, iv. 14. ix. 8, 12, 24. and there continually maketh Intercession for us.

XXIII. And He only and alone is sufficient, and therefore his Priesthood is ἀπαράβατος, he is able *for ever* to save them that come unto him, because he ever liveth to make Intercession for them, vii. 25.

XXIV. Nor can any Man on Earth produce a Divine Commission or Appointment, requisite by *Prop.* iv.

XXV. On the contrary St. *Paul* tells *Timothy*, 1 *Ep. ch.* ii. *v.* 5, 6. There is one God, and *one Mediator* between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus who gave himself a Ransom for all. And the Apostle there is so far from pretending to have succeeded Christ in this Priestly Office of Mediation, that all he pretends to is, *v.* 7. to be a Preacher of this Dispensation of God in Faith and Verity; compare *Heb.* ix. 15. xii. 24. and 2 *Cor.* v. 18. 19, 20, 21.

They who make themselves Mediators for others instead of Christ, will find they have so much the more Need of Christ's Mediation for themselves; and they who out of a pretended Humility have Recourse to any others, and who take for their *Intercessors* with God, either *Angels* who are only ministring Spirits; or fallible, weak and sinful *Men*, who want a more Powerful and Pure Mediator for themselves; They, I say, in these Things may have an outside Shew of Wisdom in voluntarily

voluntarily debaſing themſelves, but they really by thus acting diſhonour their One *Mediator*, who plainly admits no Partner in his *Mediatorial* Office.

XXVI. NOR is there any Man on Earth who can execute the *third* branch of the *Sacerdotal* Office, or *Bleſs* Authoritavely.

XXVII. BECAUSE 'tis a part of Chriſt's Prieſthood, which is ἀπαράβατος. See *Prop.* xx. nor has any one a Divine Commiſſion, ſee *Prop.* iv.

XXVIII. NOR is there any *Precept* in Scripture to apply to any Man for ſuch Benediction, or *Example* of any Miniſter pretending to ſuch an Office.

XXIX. BUT we are frequently *directed* to pray for Grace and Peace and all Bleſſings to God thro' Chriſt, and they are repreſented as coming only from them and the Holy Spirit, *Eph.* i. 2, 3. *Rev.* i. 4, 5. And in all the *Examples* we have in Scripture, the Apoſtles only *pray for Bleſſings* on thoſe to whom they write, no where *Pronounce Benediction*: And they requeſt of thoſe they write to, mutually to pray to God for them; ſo that the Apoſtles could no more (in this Senſe) *Bleſs* the Chriſtian People, than the Chriſtian People could them.

XXX. THERE is then no *Prieſt* or *Prieſthood*, no *Oblation*, *Interceſſion* or *Benediction* of any in the Chriſtian Religion but CHRIST, who is SOLE PRIEST in his CHURCH *properly* ſpeaking.

XXXI. But in a *Metaphorical* Senſe the Chriſtian Religion admits of Prieſthood and Oblation, *viz*, offering up ſpiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. offering the Sacrifice of Praiſe to God continually, *i. e.* the Fruit of our Lips giving Thanks to his Name, &c. *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16. This is an Odour of a ſweet Smell, a Sacrifice acceptable well pleaſing unto God, *Phil.* iv. 18. See *Pſ.* l. 14, 29. lxix. 30, 31. cvii. 22. and *Hoſea* xiv. 1. and of preſenting our Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reaſonable Service; of offering a contrite and broken Heart and the like. Theſe alſo are all the Sacrifices that *Juſtin Martyr*, *Athenagoras*, or *Minutius Fælix* knew off, as will appear by and by. But,

XXXII. In offering theſe Sacrifices, Chriſtians are all Prieſts. 'Tis in this Senſe Chriſtians in general are an Holy Prieſthood, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. a Royal Prieſthood *v.* 9. Thus Chriſt has made all Chriſtians Kings and Prieſts unto God his Father, *Rev.* i. 6. v. 10. xx. 6. which is the Accompliſhment of the Prophecy, *Exod.* xix. 6.

XXXIII. And in ſuch a *Metaphorical* Senſe *all* Chriſtians may execute the Prieſtly Functions of *Interceſſion* and *Benediction*, *i. e.* they may pray to God to pardon their Brethren, and wiſh for Bleſſings to be ſhowered upon them. Thus much *all* Chriſtians *may* do, and more than this (properly ſpeaking) *no* Chriſtian *can* do.

To theſe Propoſitions I know not what can be anſwered, but am my ſelf fully convinced by them that there is in Chriſtianity (ſtrictly ſpeaking) no more Prieſthood, no more Sacrifice or Altar, no Sacerdotal Powers of *Interceſſion* or *Benediction*.

SOME *Object Heb.* xiii. 10. 'We have an Altar 'whereof they have no Right to eat, who ſerve the 'Tabernacle.'

IF, ſay they, we have an Altar, we muſt have a Sacrifice, and then we muſt have a Prieſt.

BUT it is evident from the Context (which were I not afraid of growing too prolix, I could ſhew at large) that the Apoſtle by the Altar here mentioned, means the Sacrifice of Chriſt upon the Altar of the Croſs. Afterwards, *v.* 15. he ſays, 'By him, (*i. e.* Chriſt,) let us offer the Sacrifice 'of Praiſe to God continually, that is the Fruit 'of our Lips, giving Thanks to his Name. But '(or *And*) to do Good and communicate (or Be-'neficence and Liberality, εὐποιΐας καὶ κοινωνίας) for-'get not, for with ſuch Sacrifices God is well plea-'ſed.' Had the Author, *v.* 10. meant a proper Altar and Sacrifice, is it not inconceivable that he ſhould only mention the Sacrifice of Praiſe, or the Fruits of our Lips, and of good Works, *v.* 15. and declare that with *ſuch* Sacrifices God is well pleaſed, which ſeems plainly to exclude any others in Chriſtianity from being pleaſing to God? Nor is there any Intimation of Any whoſe Buſi-neſs it was to Sacrifice; but all that is ſaid of Chriſtian Miniſters in the next *v.* 17. is, 'Obey

'thoſe

'those who * are your Guides, and ſubmit your 'ſelves, for they watch for your Souls, as being to 'give Account, that they may do it with Joy, *&c.* Here is not a Word of any Prieſtly Oblation, or the Peoples applying to their Miniſters for Interceſſion, authoritative Benediction or Abſolution; but only of applying to them as Guides and Directors, on whom it was incumbent to Preach the Goſpel, and who were to account for the Diſcharge of that Duty.

THE ſame Directions are given before, *v.* 7. 'Remember them which are your Guides [τὼς ἡγουμένους] who have ſpoken unto you the Word of 'God, whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the End 'of their Converſation'. Their *Office* is deſcribed to be *ſpeaking the Word of God*, not *Sacrificing*, &c. And the *Duty* of other Chriſtians is to look on them not as Interceſſors, *&c.* or Law-givers, but as Examples of Faith and good Works, in which they are to imitate them. And ſuch Chriſtian Miniſters as ſet good Examples, may always be aſſured of all the Reſpect that can be due to them; while thoſe who neglect to *deſerve* it by an exemplary Life, and *claim* it on Account of their Character, will generally go without it.

I PROCEED to take one more View of this Point in a ſomething different Light.

CHRIST when he made a Change in the Law, made a Change alſo in the Prieſthood, *Heb.* vii.

* *So it is rightly in the Margin of our* Bible, *being improperly tranſlated, who Rule over you,* ἡγουμένοι. *See the Biſhop of* Bangor's *Anſwer to the Convocation,* p. 62.

12. from an Ineffectual to an Effectual, from a Succeſſive to an Everlaſting one, *&c.* He took away the firſt Will or Revelation of God enjoyning Legal Sacrifices, Ceremonies, *&c.* that he might eſtabliſh a Second, x. 9. By the New Covenant he hath made the firſt Old, which is aboliſhed and vaniſhed away, viii. 13.

INSTEAD of a Religion encumbered with Rites and Ceremonies, he has given us a Law conſiſting of plain and eaſy Precepts, almoſt all Dictates of Reaſon and Morality, having aboliſhed the whole Ceremonial Law, by accompliſhing what was typified by it.

To know what the Yoke is which Chriſt has delivered us from, let us take a ſhort View of the main Branches of this obſolete Ceremonial Law.

THE Ceremonial Law was the Body of poſitive Precepts concerning the external Service of God, which had no Foundation in the Law of Reaſon, but obliged only becauſe enjoyned by the Revealed Will of God.

BY theſe poſitive Precepts, Things, Perſons, *&c.* being by God's Appointment ſet a-part and appropriated to his external Worſhip, became Holy, Hallowed and Sacred.

OF this Sort were in the Law, 1. Holy Perſons. 2. Holy Things. 3. Holy Places. 4. Holy Times.

1. HOLY *Perſons* were ſuch as by God's ſpecial Appointment were ſet a-part to miniſter in his Worſhip, Sacrifices, *&c. Heb.* v. 1.

IT appears from the Nature of the Thing (Reaſon here not giving us any Direction,) and from

from the whole Old Teſtament, that the Sanctity of, and Precepts relating to, theſe Perſons, are Part not of the Moral, but the Ceremonial Law. And it appears particularly from *Heb.* v. 4, 5. where we are informed, that unleſs in a Revealed State, there can be no Prieſt, becauſe to qualify a Man to be ſo, he muſt be ſpecially deſigned by God, and from that Deſignation he derives all his Holineſs.

SUCH under the Law were the High-Prieſt, Prieſts and Levites. When Chriſt the *everlaſting* Prieſt came, he aboliſhed all this Part of the Ceremonial Law. And with the Holineſs of *Perſons*, he aboliſhed alſo,

2. THE Holineſs or particular Sanctity of *Things*, ariſing from their being by poſitive Precepts hallowed and dedicated to God's Service. Such were all Sacrifices and Oblations, dedicating of Firſt-born, Firſt-fruits, Tenths, and the like; all Diſtinction of Meats, of clean and unclean Animals, legal Waſhings, *&c.*

THESE, none of them had any Efficacy to the purifying the Conſcience, but were Typical, and have all their Completion in the Sacrifice of Chriſt, whoſe Kingdom doth not conſiſt in Meats and Drinks, *&c.* but in Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

HE that in theſe Things ſerveth Chriſt (and not he who aſcribeth any Sanctity to external Things, and maketh it Religion to do or omit, to uſe or abſtain from them) is acceptable to God, *Rom.* xiv. 17, 18.

3. ALL

3. All *Holy Places* (such as under the Law were, first the Tabernacle, and afterwards the Temple of *Jerusalem*) are rendred *Common* by Christianity. There is nothing in the Law of Reason to make one place be thought more Holy than another; All the Precepts in the Law concerning them, depended on the positive Will of God; which being taken away by Christ, who is entred into the true *Holy Place*, accordingly Men now are not to confine the Worship of God to this or that place, the Temple at *Jerusalem*, or on Mount *Gerizim*, or any other; but as God is a Spirit, they are to worship him in Spirit and Truth, *John* 4. 23, 24. to lift up pure Hands unto him, and pray with sincere Hearts; and then all Places [and Times too] are alike to God. And to ascribe peculiar Sanctity to Places, is plainly relapsing to *Judaism*.

4. In the Law were many positive Precepts regarding Holy Times or Seasons, Sabbaths, New Moons, and the like; which have no Foundation in the Law of Reason, and are all abolished by Christianity, which placeth no Holiness in one day above another. And yet from the Apostles dedicating one Day in the Seven to the more peculiar Service of God, some Men have pleaded for as strict a Sanctity in the *Lord's Day* observed among Christians, as was in the *Sabbath* of the *Jews*: Tho' Days and Months, and Times and Seasons, are by St. *Paul* called weak and beggarly Elements, *Gal.* 4. 9, 10. against which he cautions Christians not to bring themselves in Bondage to them. And the laying stress on these he thinks so savouring of *Judaism*, and inconsistent with Christianity, that he professes to fear he had bestowed his Labour in vain on such as were zealous for them.

And now how can They who plead for the material Holineſs of a particular Order of Men, (and ſome teach the People to aſcribe a more than ordinary Holineſs to the very Garments they wear;) of particular Utenſils, Meats and Drinks; of particular Buildings and Portions of Ground; of particular Days and Seaſons; and who have loaded Chriſtianity with an intolerable Burden of Rites and Ceremonies relating to theſe, as a part of *Religion*: How, I ſay, can theſe Men declare that the Chriſtian Yoke is eaſier than the Jewiſh? For what is it then, that Chriſt has aboliſhed? what Yoke is it he has delivered us from? to what Liberty has he called us?

Having thus ſhewn, that in Chriſtianity CHRIST alone is PRIEST, I ſhall now ſhew

II. That the Pretenders to *proper Sacerdotal* Powers, under that Name uſurp not only the *Sacerdotal* but *Regal* Office of Chriſt.

And here I ſhall have an opportunity to conſider what was the proper Office of the Apoſtles, and what that of the preſent Clergy is.

Chriſt was a *Prophet*, a *Prieſt*, and a *King*.

His Office as *Prophet*, was to *Preach* the Goſpel or Terms of Salvation *to* Mankind; as *Prieſt*, to *obtain* Salvation *for* them; and as *King*, to *confer* it *on* them.

As *Prophet*, he *Preached* the Goſpel in his own Perſon, while on Earth, and afterwards by his Holy Spirit inſpiring his Apoſtles.

As *Prieſt*, he effectually obtained the Gracious Terms of Salvation for them, by *Sacrificing* himſelf for their Sins; *Interceding* with the Father for them, Pleading their Cauſe, being their Advocate, 1 *Jo.* 2, 1.

and

and continually appearing in the Preſence of God for them; and by *Bleſſing* them removing their Guilt, and rendring them Juſt: For this I underſtand by Bleſſing in a *Sacerdotal* Senſe, and as differing from the actual conferring of Salvation, which is a Regal, and not a Sacerdotal Act.

As *King*, Chriſt *ſent his Ambaſſadors* the Apoſtles and Prophets, to call all Men every where, to ſhare in the Privileges of his Kingdom: He *gave Laws* to thoſe who profeſſed themſelves Subjects to him; which are *Faith*, or believing him to be the *Meſſiah* ſent from God with the Authority of Legiſlator and Judge in Matters of Conſcience and Salvation; and *Repentance* with Amendment of Life, conſiſting in a conſtant and ſincere Endeavour of Knowing and Doing all his Will to the utmoſt of our Power. And laſtly, He *Judicially* Tryes, and Abſolves or Condemns; and exerciſes an *Executive* Power in Rewarding and Puniſhing his Subjects.

Let us now ſee what it is, that Men pretend to *ſucceed* Chriſt in.

Many lay claim to ſucceed Him in his Offices of *Oblation*, *Interceſſion*, and *Benediction*, which are his *Sacerdotal* Offices: But beſide theſe, Men claim others under the ſame Name, which have no manner of Relation to the *Prieſthood*, but are purely acts of Chriſt's *Regal* Office.

Some indeed take to themſelves the Stile and Title of Spiritual *Kings* and *Princes* as well as of *Prieſts*, exalt themſelves to *Thrones*, call themſelves *Prieſts after the Order of Melchiſedech*, (*i. e.* as they interpret it, *Kings* and *Prieſts* both,) and openly uſurp *Dominion* over the Flock of Chriſt, over whom none ought to be placed with greater Authority than that of *Overſeers*.

But others, and particularly Mr. *Law*, diſſemble the *Name*, and put in their claim for the acts of *Regal* Power under the Title of *Sacerdotal* Office. Such are

First, Giving a Divine Commiſſion to Men to be Chriſt's Ambaſſadors and Vice-gerents, and with *Authority* to Repreſent Him on Earth.

Under this I do not include the pretence of *conferring* a *proper Sacerdotal* Character upon Men; becauſe this is no part of any Office of Chriſt at all: 'Tis a Power *appropriated* to God the Father only. Chriſt did not take this Honour to himſelf, but as he was called of God: He did not make Himſelf, nor any Man on Earth a Prieſt. So that this is a pretence to *ſucceed* to *more* Power than Chriſt himſelf had, and is an Encroachment on the *proper* Authority of God the Father. But *ſending Ambaſſadors* to call all Men into Chriſt's Kingdom, and intreat them to be Reconciled to God by him, 2 *Cor.* 5. 18, &c. is a part of Chriſt's *Regal* Office.

Chriſt exerciſed it in *ſending* the Apoſtles when he firſt erected his Kingdom, to *Proclaim* the Privileges of it to all the World, and *Invite* them into it; and for the due *diſcharge* of this Office, he *qualify'd* them by giving them the Holy Ghoſt and Miraculous Powers, which were to be their *Credentials* to Mankind, to confirm the Truth of their *Miſſion* and their *Meſſage*.

On others alſo He conferred the ſame Gifts, and made them Ambaſſadors, by the Impoſition of the Apoſtles Hands.

Theſe Ambaſſadors thus ſent, were neither *Prieſts* not *Kings*, nor ever pretended to the Exerciſe of any *Regal* or *Sacerdotal* Act; but they were *Prophets*, *Meſ-*

Meſſengers and *Ambaſſadors* of God to Men. Their Buſineſs was properly *Prophetick*, to *Preach* the Goſpel to all the World; this was their Commiſſion, and in this Character they did ſucceed Chriſt by his own Appointment.

When once Chriſtianity was propagated over the World, and Chriſts Kingdom eſtabliſhed, *ſuch Ambaſſadors* were no longer Neceſſary: And accordingly we find that within a Century the Office ceaſed, nor have any that have ſince pretended to the Character been able to produce the Apoſtolick Credentials of Miracles, *&c.* And without ſuch an extraordinary Commiſſion, all who come into Chriſt's Kingdom, have equal Privileges, the ſame Rights, and the ſame Obligations.

But tho' Chriſtians were not always to have among them Perſons with extraordinary Powers, yet they were always to be an *orderly* Kingdom: And therefore they were to take care their Aſſemblies ſhould be well regulated, and all Confuſion and Diſorder prevented, in the publick Homage they were to pay to their King, and to God thro' Him.

He had given them but few poſitive Injunctions in this matter; He preſcribed a Form of Baptiſm, inſtituted a Religious Feaſt in Memory of his Death; and left them a Prayer, in Conformity to which all Chriſtians ought to Pray to God in his Name. The reſt was left to their Diſcretion.

While Chriſt's Ambaſſadors the Apoſtles were with them, in the Churches they left a Model of the *Order* and *Decency* that was moſt adapted for *Edification*; and this not by way of *Authority* or *Precept*, (which is Arch-Bp. *Cranmer's* Opinion as well as mine; for they were to *Preclaim* and not *make* Laws;) but of *Advice* and Counſel, and Friendly Direction. And

And great regard no doubt ought then and till, to be had to their *Directions*, who were *inspired*, and so may be well supposed to have been more able to Judge what was most *Decent* and *Orderly* and for *Edification*, than the Un-inspired Converts, who would have been much to blame to have preferred their own Judgments above that of the Apostles.

Great Regard I say, was, and ought to be had to the Judgment of the Apostles. But that they † *did* or *could* make any *proper Laws* in things of *Order* and *Decency*, and Rules that should be Unalterable, tho afterwards, the Circumstances of Things and Times altering, it would be more for Order and Edification to alter them; this I deny.

The Apostles we find gave out various Rules, as the several occasions of the Churches under their Care required. One was, that the Converts from Heathenism should abstain from Blood, in Order to their more easy Incorporation with the Jews. Another was the Order of Deaconnesses, who Ministred to the first Preachers of the Gospel, and assisted them in Converting and Baptizing Women. The Kiss of Charity, whereby the Primitive Christians used to express their love to one another, was introduced by the same Authority; so were the Ἀγάπαι, or Love-Feasts that preceded the Celebration of the Lord's Supper; and the bringing Voluntary Contributions to their Assemblies at the same time, for Pious and Charitable Uses, and presenting them as Oblations to the Lord.

Yet all these were variable Precepts, and, tho Apostolical Usages, have been laid aside by the Church with Universal Approbation, and the World remains

† See the Bishop of Oxford's *Church Government*, p. 305--312.

satisfied

ſatisfied to this day, with the Reaſons of diſuſing them.

The Apoſtles left, 'tis true, ſettled Orders of Church Government [not of Chriſtian *Prieſts*, for they were not ſuch themſelves, nor could make others ſuch, but] of *Biſhops*. And that *Epiſcopal* Government is the *beſt* and *decenteſt*, I allow: But that 'tis *unalterable*, when the Exigencies of Affairs require, I deny. The Apoſtles had no Authority to make any *neceſſary* Inſtitutions, or enjoin Rites and Ceremonies *as of neceſſity* to Salvation. To ſay they had, would be to make them Kings and Lords, which they denied of themſelves, profeſſing themſelves the Servants of Men for the Lord's ſake; and I cannot believe that that Profeſſion in them had no more Sincerity in it, then their pretended Succeſſor, the Pope's, of being *Servus Servorum Dei*. To make the Apoſtles Law-givers, wou'd be to ſuppoſe them Preaching another Goſpel than that they received from Chriſt, and ſo falling under their own *Anathemas*, as being properly Hereticks αὐτοκατάκριτοι Self-condemned, doing that which they allow not: It ſuppoſes them Building up again what Chriſt had Deſtroyed, and re-impoſing on Chriſtians that Yoke from which Chriſt had ſet them free, and abridging the Liberty into which He had called them, at the ſame time that they exhorted them to ſtand faſt in it, and to bring themſelves in Bondage to no Man.

It appears then that the Apoſtles were *Prophets* and Ambaſſadors to Preach the Goſpel to the World, but had no *Regal* or *Sacerdotal* Powers: the Rules of Order and Decency which they made, were Rules of Advice, not of Authority. None therefore could *ſucceed* them in theſe Powers which *they* had not: Nor did

any

any ſucceed them in the Office in which they Succeeded Chriſt, that is, the *Prophetick*, longer than the Occaſion and Qualifications for it continued in the Church.

'Tis for this Reaſon, that no Arguments drawn from the *Actions* of the Apoſtles, or the *Authority* they who were *inſpired* Prophets had, to juſtify the *Actions*, or ſupport the *Authority* of *Uninſpired* Men now, are of any Force.

Here then is One Act of Chriſt's *Regal* Office, that of *ſending Ambaſſadors* to Proclaim his Laws, claimed under the Title of *Sacerdotal* Office.

A *Second* Act of Chriſt's *Regal* Office, is the *Legiſlative* or Making Laws.

Some who call themſelves *Chriſtian Prieſts*, have alſo confounded this with the *Sacerdotal* Office, and under the name of *Prieſtly Government* have ſo far uſurped Chriſt's Authority of *Legiſlation*, as to leave Him no ſhare in the Government of his own Kingdom. Under the Titles of Interpreters and Vicegerents, they have aſſumed to themſelves an Abſolute Power of making Laws that oblige the Conſcience, and on which Men's Salvation ſhall depend. Inſtead of being what the Apoſtles profeſſed themſelves, the *Servants of Men* for the Lord's ſake, they under pretence of *Succeeding* the Apoſtles, have made themſelves *Lords of God's Heritage*. Under the Notion of *Spiritual* Power and Authority from Chriſt, they have inveſted themſelves with *Temporal* and Civil Power, and by Inquiſitions and Gaols have Sacrilegiouſly poſſeſſed themſelves of an Empire over Men's Conſcience, at the Expence of Sincerity, of every thing that is good

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and vertuous, amiable and praiſe-worthy, of every Chriſtian Grace and Vertue. They have erected a Kingdom of their own upon the Ruins of that of Chriſt. All this they have done by pretending to a proper *Sacerdotal* Character, which they cannot have; and then by making that a part of the *Sacerdotal* Function, which has no relation to it.

What has a *Prieſt* to do to *make Laws*, whoſe whole Office conſiſts in *Miniſtring* for Men to God? Had ever the *Jewiſh Prieſts* any Right, as ſuch, to *make Laws?* Did their Office imply or include any thing of *Government?* Were they to be *God*'s Miniſters *to* the People, or were they not rather appointed by God to miniſter *to* Him *for* the People? The Scribes and Phariſees, the *Lay Doctors* of the Law, indeed laid claim to a Right of impoſing their *Traditions* as *Laws*; but this was never thought part of the *Sacerdotal* Office.

The *Third* and laſt Branch of Chriſt's *Regal Power*, is of *Judicially* Abſolving or Condemning, and *Executively* Rewarding or Puniſhing his Subjects.

Nothing can be more plainly a *Regal* Act, or leſs a *Sacerdotal* one; and yet as ſuch it has been claimed under the Title of Sacerdotal Abſolution, Sacerdotal Power of the Keys, *&c.* And yet what have *Prieſthood* and *Abſolution* to do with one another? Even Mr. *Law* owns, *p.* 60. 'That 'tis the Office of 'a *King* to *Pardon* his Subjects; and *p.* 66. That 'tis an Act of *Kingly* Power to *Remit* or Reprieve 'a Malefactor. How then is it the Office and Act of a *Prieſt*, unleſs all that are *Prieſts* are *Kings* too?

† That the Christian Church has a Power of Censuring Offenders, and Excommunicating Disorderly and Scandalous Sinners; which Censures, upon Repentance, may be taken off, and the Offenders re-admitted to the Communion of the Church; is undoubted. And this Remission of the *Censures of the Church* to Penitents, is what is properly called *Church-Absolution*. This and the Excommunication that preceded, were formerly so impartially applied, that none were in a State of Excommunication but such scandalous Sinners, who were as unfit for Heaven, by reason of their Wickednesses unrepented of, as for the Communion of Christians; for which reason *Tertullian* calls the Churches Excommunication, *summum futuri Judicii Præjudicium*.

But as for Private Absolution by a Private Priest, 'tis of late Date; and the Authoritative Form, *I Absolve Thee*, still later; not known till the || 13*th* or 14*th* Centuries, when the *Romish* Priests began to make a more professed Trade of Religion.

At first the Excommunications and Absolutions exercised by the Church (which are founded in Scripture, and result from the Churches being a Society) were the Acts of the *whole Church*: That the Laws of the Gospel confine them to one certain *Order of Clergy*. I deny; much less of *Priests*.

Nor did these Acts of the Church at all *affect the State of Men, with regard to the Favour or Displeasure of Almighty God*. These Men must notwithstanding

† See a Defence of the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of *England* against some Modern Innovations, *A. D.* 1712. p. 40. 41, 42, 43.

|| See this proved in Dr. *Cannon*'s Account of two Motions against Dr. *Bennet* in Convocation; from *Morinus* and *Martene*, &c. p. 20, &c.

be

be guided by their own Conciences, without Fear of Mans Judgment: For (as the Biſhop of *Oxford* has determined, *pag* 348. of his *Church Government*) 'They that live up to the Rules of the Goſpel 'need not fear the Condemnation of any Men 'whatever.

I ſhall now conſider two or three of the chief Texts, in which the Pretence to a Sacerdotal Power of the Keys, in the *Clergy*, and not in the *Church*, is grounded.

'Tis plain That Text, *Matth.* xviii. 18. deſcribes a Power not in any *particular Order* of Men, but in the *whole Church*. 'Tell it to the *Church*.

The chief Text inſiſted on is, John xx. 21, 22, 23. '*As my Father ſent me, ſo ſend I you: And when* 'he had ſaid this, he breathed on them, and ſaith, 'receive ye the Holy Ghoſt; whoſeſoever Sins ye remit, 'they are remitted, and whoſeſoever Sins ye retain, 'they are retained.

Whatever Power is here given the Apoſtles, to me appears certainly to be confined to them, becauſe it is given them in conſequence of their having received the Holy Ghoſt.

It may perhaps ſignify the Miraculous Power they had of freeing Men from Diſeaſes inflicted on them for Sins, upon Faith and Repentance and Converſion to Chriſtianity; and of inflicting Diſeaſes on ſcandalous Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, or obſtinate Oppoſers of it. Such a Power the Apoſtles had, and exerciſed it often in curing Diſeaſes; and ſometimes in inflicting them, or other Temporal Puniſhments on Chriſtians, as on the Inceſtuous *Corinthian*, *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, &c. and on ſuch as wickedly withſtood them, as *Elymas*.

Beyond This, 'tis most probable to me (and my Opinion agrees with that of Archbishop *Tillotson* in his First Sermon on *the Use of Miracles for the Confirmation of the Christian Religion,*) that nothing more is meant by it, than that 'they had a Power given them of 'Baptizing Men into Christianity, who if they Be-'lieved and were Baptized should be *Saved*, *i. e.* 'have their *Sins remitted*; and of Declaring that 'all who rejected their Preaching, and would not 'Believe, should be *Damned* and Die in their Sins, '*i. e.* have their Sins retained

This I am convinced of from the parallel Places of St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*.

St. *Mark* gives an Account of the *same* Appearance of Christ to the Eleven, *chap.* xvi. 15, 16. and of the Commission He *then* gave his Apostles. '*He said unto* 'them, *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gos-*'*pel unto every Creature. He that Believeth and is* 'Baptized *shall be Saved*; *but he that Believed not,* '*shall be Damned.*

These words are certainly of the same import with those of St. *John*, '*As my Father sent me, so* '*send I you,—whosesoever Sins ye remit, they are re-*'*mitted, and whosesoever Sins ye retain, they are re-*'*tained. So send I you*, answers to *Go and Preach*; *Sins being remitted*, answers to *being Saved*; and *being retained*, to *being Damned*.

St. *Mark* understood this to be all the Power given the Apostles by that Commission; else when he was professedly giving an Account of the Powers Christ gave his Apostles, how could he be a Faithful Historian if he omitted the greatest of all? Besides this Power of Preaching the Gospel, and, by so doing, of Converting Men to Salvation, or leaving

ving them to periſh without Excuſe. St. *Mark* gives no account of any other Powers the Apoſtles had, '*But that in Chriſt's Name they ſhould caſt out Devils,* '*ſpeak with new Tongues, take up Serpents, and if* '*they drank any deadly thing it ſhould not hurt them,* '*that they ſhould lay hands on the Sick; and they* '*ſhould recover.*

So that either the Power of *remitting Sins* muſt be the Power of *laying Hands on the Sick*, or (what is to me more probable) of being Inſtruments, by their Preaching, of the Remiſſion or Retaining of Mens Sins.

In St. *Luke's* Account of the ſame Appearance and Commiſſion, *chap.* xxiv. 34---49, we only read that Chriſt opened their Underſtandings that they might underſtand the Scriptures; and told them that *Repentance* and *Remiſſion of Sins* ſhould be *PREACHED* [not conferred, nor Sins remitted by the Apoſtles, but the *Terms* of their Remiſſion *Preached*] in his Name among all Nations, beginning at *Jeruſalem*; and that they were to be—[not Forgivers of Sins, or Diſtributers of God's Favours, but]——*Witneſſes of theſe things.*

Theſe are my Reaſons, which, as you ſee Evidence, approve or reject. The Commiſſion to St. *Peter*, *Matth.* xvi. 18, 19. either is to be underſtood by this Key, or referred to ſome Powers miraculous and long ago ceaſed; for which Opinion ſee the fore-quoted Sermon of Archbiſhop *Tillotſon.*

The firſt Words in the Commiſſion, recorded by St. *John*, viz. '*As my Father ſent Me, ſo ſend I You*, I ſuppoſe to import the ſame as *Go and Preach* in St. *Mark.* Chriſt was ſent by God to *Preach*, and make known a new Revelation; So Chriſt ſent them

to

to preach and propagate the ſame. And as God gave Chriſt the Spirit without meaſure, to direct Him in this Office; ſo Chriſt gave the Holy Ghoſt to his Diſciples, (*Receive, ſaith He, the Holy Ghoſt*) to make known to them Infallibly the Will of God which they were to Preach; and He endued them with Miraculous Powers, to convince Mankind that they truly came from God.

Yet ſome inſiſt mightily on theſe Words. One Power, ſay they, with which God ſent Chriſt, was that of ſending others: Therefore Chriſt ſending his Apoſtles as God ſent *Him*, gave them a Power of ſending others in the ſame manner.

But I anſwer: We are not obliged to own all the Conſequences that may be drawn from theſe Words, taken in the full and *ſtrict* Senſe; becauſe its certain they muſt not be ſo taken: For Chriſt did not ſend his Apoſtles for all the ſame Purpoſes, or with all the ſame Powers He was ſent Himſelf.

God ſent Chriſt to propoſe New Terms of Salvation to Mankind, to offer himſelf a Sacrifice and make Satisfaction for their Sins, and thereby to make Perfect for Ever thoſe who are Sanctified; to be a Mediator of a New Covenant, a King, a Law-giver, and Judge of all the World.

But did Chriſt ſend his *Apoſtles* ſo? He ſent them indeed to offer New Terms of Salvation to Mankind: But did He ſend them to Offer themſelves Sacrifices for, and make Satisfaction for the Sins of the World, and to make Perfect over again thoſe who were already made Perfect for Ever? Did He ſend them to be Mediators of a New Covenant? To be Kings, or Law-givers, or Judges of all the World? And do

all

all the Clergy, from the beginning of Chriſtianity, ſucceed Chriſt in all theſe reſpects?

So then in the *Kingly* and *Prieſtly* Office, the Apoſtles did not ſucceed Chriſt. If any pretend to ſucceed them in the *Prophetick* Office, let them ſhew the Works of an Apoſtle, let them produce their Credentials: 'Till then, I muſt believe that there is no Man on Earth, who is, in Religious Matters, in the *Senſe* I have now explained, more *King*, *Prieſt*, or *Prophet* than another; or who has any ſpecial Commiſſion from God more than other Chriſtians: And I muſt lament, that there are nevertheleſs ſo many, who under pretence of ſucceeding Chriſt in his *Sacerdotal* Office, have uſurped alſo every Branch of his *Regal*, and thruſt themſelves without Warrant into the *Prophetick* Office. I am now

III. To ſhew that Men came firſt to pretend to ſuch Powers, and ſtill defend thoſe Pretences, by confounding the Notions of Chriſtian *Miniſters* and Legal *Prieſts*; which, till the Miſtakes and Artifices of Men thus Blended them, were as different as Light and Darkneſs.

That the Ambiguity of the *Engliſh* word *Prieſt*, has been the occaſion of great Confuſion and Miſtakes concerning the Powers of the Clergy, and diſpoſed the People eaſily to ſwallow the Doctrines of Sacerdotal Oblation, Benediction, Abſolution, and the like; is certain. Ask any common Perſon, if he has not the ſame Idea of the word *Prieſt*, when uſed in Scripture for a *Legal Prieſt*; and when uſed in modern Phraſe, for a particular Order of Men in the Chriſtian Church: Or if he has the leaſt Suſpicion that the *ſame* Word in our Language, is uſed for

for two Words in the Original of the New Teſtament, of quite different Significations.

The original Words ἱερεὺς and πρεσβύτερος came to be confounded very early, which I take to have happened thus: As the Apoſtles were to convince the Chriſtians of the Aboliſhing of all the Legal Typical Sacrifices, ſo they were to ſhew them a more effectual Way to the favour of God by the Spiritual Worſhip of the Goſpel; and it was of great Uſe to this purpoſe, and to wean them from their former Prejudices, to apply the Sacrificial Language of Gifts, Altars, Sacrifices, Prieſts, *&c.* to this Spiritual Service. Thus St *Paul*, and after his example ſeveral Fathers, applied to all the Parts of the Chriſtian Service, with a great deal of Liberty, the Sacrificial Phraſes and Expreſſions, which they could intend to be underſtood *figuratively* only. With the ſame good Deſign of bringing over both Jews and Gentiles more eaſily to the Chriſtian Religion, the Apoſtles inſtituted the Ceremonies and Externals of Chriſtian Worſhip; not without ſome reſemblance to what Converts of both ſorts, but particularly the Jews, had been accuſtomed to. Afterwards Men grew fond of making every Thing in Chriſtianity look as much like Judaiſm as they could; and of making, what the Apoſtles had inſtituted only as moſt *convenient* and likely to bring over Converts to be *properly Parts* of Chriſtianity, and *Completions* of the Legal Types.

Hence it came to be thought the Ceremonial Law was not *aboliſhed*, but only received it's *Completion* by Chriſtianity; and ſo *Deacons* were declared to ſucceed in the room of *Levites*, Presbyters or *Elders* in the place of Sacrificers or Prieſts, and the *Biſhop* in the place of Chief Sacrificer or High Prieſt. And

'tis

'tis a wonder they found no Order among the Jews, to whom the Order of *Deaconeſſes* ſucceeded.

But for theſe Imaginations there was no ground in Scripture, nor the Opinions of the Ages neareſt the Apoſtles. In thoſe Ages, * when Chriſtians were charged by the Jews, with violating the Laws of God in not offering Sacrifices; they inſiſted on their being aboliſhed, and a new one inſtituted in their ſtead, by God's Decree, under the Meſſiah; and foretold *Mal.* 1. 11. Many Fathers apply the *Pure Offering* there propheſyed of, to the Chriſtian Euchariſt; but when they come to explain what is offered in that, ſome explain it of the Contributions made and offered to God, at the time of it's Celebration, for Pious Uſes; but Moſt underſtand it of *Prayers* and *Praiſes*, as *Ireneus*, *Tertullian*, and others.

While they looked on thoſe Devotions as the true Chriſtian Sacrifices, they uſed the Sacrificial Language very freely; and knowing one another's meaning, were not afraid of being miſunderſtood. But (to ſhew that all that was Figurative) when they were charged by Jews or Heathens, as Impious, becauſe they had *no Sacrifices*, *Prieſts or Temples*, and were thereby obliged to give a direct Anſwer; they did not then, when it would have been moſt for their purpoſe, aſſert they had *Sacrifices*, or *Prieſts*, or *Temples*; but inſtead of that, inſiſt on *Spiritual* Sacrifices of Prayers and Praiſes from a Pure Heart.

Thus *Juſtin Martyr* tells *Trypho* the Jew, 'that *Pray-* 'ers and *Thankſgivings* offered of thoſe that are wor- 'thy, are the *ONLY* perfect and pleaſing Sacrifices 'to God. And Chriſtians are taught to offer *ONLY*

 'theſe

* See an Anſwer to the Exceptions made againſt the Bp. of *Oxford's* Charge by Mr. *L.* and Dr. *B.* 1713. particularly *p.* 57. 58, 59.

' these, even in the *Remembrance* of their Food both ' wet and dry, in which a *Memorial* is made of ' the Passion, *&c.* p. 346.

Athenagoras in the same manner answers the same Objection, *Apol.* p. 13. ' God, says He, accounts this ' the *Greatest Sacrifice*, that we acknowledge who it is ' that hath stretched out the Heavens, *&c.* — When ' we think of these things, and *lift up Holy Hands* ' unto Him; what *other Sacrifices* does He want? *&c.*

And when *Cæcilius* the Heathen makes the same Objection to *Minutius Felix*, He answers, *p.* 313. Ed. Var. ' *Templum quod ei extruam, cùm totus hic* ' *Mundus ejus opere fabricatus eum capere non possit?* ' *Et cum Homo latius maneam, intra unam ædiculam* ' *vim tantæ Majestatis includam? Nonne melius in* ' *nostrâ dedicandus est mente? In nostro imo conse-* ' *crandus est pectore? Hostias & Victimas Deo offe-* ' *ram, quas in usum mei protulit, ut rejiciam ei munus* ' *suum? Ingratum est; cum sit litabilis hostia bonus* ' *animus & pura mens et sincera Conscientia. Igitur qui* ' *Innocentiam colit, Domino supplicat; Qui Justitiam,* ' *Deo libat; qui fraudibus abstinet, propitiat Deum;* ' *qui Hominem periculo subripit, optimam victimam cæ-* ' *dit; Hæc nostra Sacrificia, hec Dei sacra sunt.*

Hence it appears, that the name of *Priest* was given to Christian Ministers, and Sacrificial Terms to their Ministrations, only *figuratively*: The promiscuous use of the Words encreased more and more; and at last, it suiting well with the designs of Ambitious Men, who regarded more the Worldly Interest of their Order than the Honour of Religion, the Figure was dropt, and the Words made perfectly Synonymous. That this went smoothly on in the times of Darkness and *Popery*, is no wonder; but why by the

Light

Light of the *Reformation* the Notion of Christian Ministers is no better understood among *Us*, I know no reason so Natural, as that by using the *same* Word in *our Language*, to express *both* Ideas of *Christian Minister* and *Legal Sacrificer*, we forget that there is any *difference* between them.

Our Reformers were not insensible of this: for as they Translated ἱερεὺς always *Priest*, so, to make a difference between them in *ours* as well as in Scripture-Language, they every where Translated πρεσβύτερος, according to the natural Signification of the Word, *Elder*.

But notwithstanding this Caution of our *Reformers* in their *Translation*, the Word *Priest* was left in their *Liturgies*, and continued in *Common Use*: And hence are the People imposed on.

The Glorious Martyr Bishop *Hooper*, knew what advantage the Notions of Sacerdotal Oblation, *&c.* would have from using the Word *Priest*; and therefore somewhere in his Comment on the X Commandments, has Words to this purpose: 'For this 'reason I have carefully avoided the Words *Priest* and 'Altar in my Writings, and wish others would do 'so too, because when they are used, the silly Peo-'ple will presently Dream of a *Sacrifice*.

Concerning this matter, take the Opinion of the Learned *Hooker*, who in his *Eccles. Pol.* B. 5. c. 78. speaking of the use of the Word Priest, which *T. Cartwright* Condemned in these Words. 'Seeing 'then that *Sacrifice* is now no part of the Church-'Ministry, how should the name of *Priesthood* be 'thereunto rightly applyed? In answer thereunto allows the Use of the Word at large, and by way of Correspondence, as St. *Paul* speaks of the

Fleſh of Fiſhes: and then He adds. 'The Fathers of 'the Church with like Security of Speech call'd 'uſually the *Miniſtry* of the Goſpel *Prieſthood*, in re-'gard of that which the Goſpel hath proportiona-'ble to the Ancient Sacrifice, — altho' it hath pro-'perly now *no Sacrifice.*

The Learned Dr. *John Reynolds*, in his Confe-rence with *Hart* the Jeſuite, *Ed.* 1588. *p.* 464. vin-dicating our *Engliſh* Tranſlation in not uſing the word *Prieſt*, ſays; 'Seeing our Language doth mean 'by [Prieſts] *Sacrificers*, which in their [the Apo-'ſtles] Language are called ἱερεῖς, and they never 'give the name of ἱερεῖς to the Paſtors of the then 'Church, it followeth that they give them not 'the name of Prieſts. Or, if you reply that they 'give them the name, becauſe they called them 'πρεσβύτερος, whence our *Engliſh* name *Prieſt* is de-'rived; yet you cannot ſay that they called them '*Prieſts*, as the name of *Prieſt* hath relation to '*Sacrifice*; — For ſo the word *Prieſt* muſt have 'two meanings, the one of πρεσβύτερος, the other 'of ἱερεὺς; whereof the one is given by the Apo-'ſtles, but doth not imply Authority to Sacrifice; 'the other doth imply Authority to Sacrifice, but 'is not given by the Apoſtles.

πρεσβύτερος, or Elder, among the Jews never ſig-nified *Prieſt* or Sacrificer; but when it was not uſed in its propereſt ſignification to denote Age, was ap-plied to particular Lay-Men, the Magiſtrates in the Jewiſh Polity. as *Patres* and *Senatores* in *Latin*, and *Aldermen* in *Engliſh*; and ſo *Pſ.* 105. 22. we Tran-ſlate זקניו Senators, *to teach his Senators Wiſdom.* Wherever the name *Elder* is mentioned of the Jews in the New Teſtament, 'tis evidently contradiſtin-guiſhed from the Prieſts. And

And if we take a view of all the Names given in Scripture to the Officers of the Christian Church, we shall find they none of them carry any Idea of *Priest* or *King*, *Mediator* or *Ruler*: But only denote a Designation either to the *Extraordinary* Propagation of the Gospel by Miraculous Powers; or the Solemn Performance of the *Ordinary* publick Worship, and Regulation of matters of Order and Decency among Christians.

Of the first sort are such as import a *Commission*, being sent of an *Errand*, or *Message*, or *Embassy*; such are Ἄγγελος, *Angel* or *Messenger*; Ἀπόστολος, *Apostle* or *Messenger*; Πρεσβευτὴς, *Ambassador*; Προφήτης, *Prophet*; and Εὐαγγελίστης, *Preacher*, or one who bringeth good Tidings.

All these imply only a *Prophetick* and no *Sacerdotal* Character. To extraordinarily-Commissioned Persons are confined also the Names of ὑπηρέτης Χριστοῦ καὶ Οἰκόνομοι μυστηρίων Θεοῦ, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. Officers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God. Also Συνεργοὶ Θεοῦ, 2 *Cor.* 6. 1. workers with God, *i. e.* Instruments appointed by Him to bring about the Salvation of Mankind, by Preaching the Gospel.

There are some Names that particularly relate to particular *extraordinary* Gifts, as 1 *Cor.* 12. 28, 29, 30. Δυνάμεις, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν, χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, διερμηνευτὰι, which have no more to do with *Priesthood* or *Kingship* than with the *present Age*.

There are other Names, which tho' they may well enough be given to the *Ordinary* Ministers, yet 'tis doubted whether they are not always used in Scripture for the *Extraordinary*; Such are Ποιμὴν, *Pastor*, which implies no *Priesthood* or *Dominion*. See the Bishop of *Bangor*'s *Answer to the Convocation*, p. 60, 61.

61. on this Name. And διδάσκαλος, Master or Teacher, which includes no Sacerdotal or Regal Office; but the proper Business of such an one is νουθετεῖν, to Instruct, 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. which is part of the proper business of the standing Ministers of the Church.

λειτουργὸς, or Minister, is a Name proper enough for the Ordinary *Clergy* (as they are now called by a Name wholly unknown in Scripture:) but in the New Testament 'tis no where used but by St. *Paul* of himself, *Rom.* 15. 16. where he gives a Metaphorical Description of his Office, taken from the *Jewish* Service, in which he represents himself as a *Priest*, and the *Gentiles* whom he has Converted, as his Oblation; by doing which, he does not ascribe to himself any proper *Sacerdotal* Office, or make himself a proper Priest, any more than he does the *Gentiles* a proper Oblation.

There are some other Names of Duty in the Apostles, which, all will own, include no Power, *Sacerdotal* or other; as 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. κοπιῶντες *Labourers*, στρατιῶται *Soldiers*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 3, 4. *Phil.* 2. 25. δοῦλοι *Servants*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 5. see on that Text the Bishop of *Bangors Answer to the Convocation*, p. 62.

The Names of the *Ordinary* Standing Ministers in the Church of Christ are these Five, προϊστάμενοι or προεστῶτες *Presidents*, Ἡγούμενοι *Leaders* or *Guides*, Ἐπίσκοποι *Bishops* or *Overseers*, πρεσβύτεροι *Elders*, now called *Priests*, and διάκονοι *Servants* or *Deacons*, and *Deaconesses*, for there were of both Sexes.

The Name προϊστάμενοι or *Presidents*, implies nothing of *Sacerdotal* Power, nor *Regal*, but only of such an *Authority* and *Ruling Power*, as is necessary for Order and Decency, and no more. No Right

to

to make Laws, or Arbitrarily inflict Puniſhments, is included in this Name.

Thus, for Illuſtration, we have *Preſidents* here, but not Abſolute. Should any Preſident or Head of a College *among Us*, pretend to make Statutes, or Expell Fellows without the Conſent of the Society, or any way act Arbitrarily, he would be told he is not *Lord and Maſter*; he is only *Set over* the Society for *Order* and Decency ſake, and at beſt has but a Double Voice in it; and that if he inſiſts on more Authority than is his Due, he might find the Society would inſiſt on their Rights, and preſerve them, if it be neceſſary, by turning him out of his Preſidentſhip.

Ἡγούμενος *Guide* or *Leader*, implies nothing of a *Sacerdotal* or *Regal* Office. See the Biſhop of *Bangors Anſwer to the Convocation*, p. 60. — 63. on this Name.

Ἐπίσκοπος *Biſhop* or *Overſeer*, implies only a *Duty* of Watching over, and Directing Chriſt's Flock. And the ſame I have ſhewn before of Πρεσβύτερος or *Elder*.

Διάκονοι *Servants* or *Deacons*, I think never were allowed any *Sacerdotal* Character. 'Tis plain in their Inſtitution, *Acts* vi. Their Buſineſs was only to ſerve Tables, to diſtribute the daily Charity of the Church, receive the Alms, Contributions and the like.

There were alſo an Order * of *Deaconeſſes*, of whom was *Phebe*, *Rom.* 16. 1. Οὖσαν Διάκονον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Κεγχρεαῖς *Deaconeſs of the Church of Cenchrea.* The Directions 1 *Tim.* v. concerning Widows, are ſup-

poſed

* *See* page 22. *from Biſhop* Potter, *p.* 309.

poſed to relate to the appointing to this Office.

This Order was afterwards laid aſide; which (as it was, for ought I ſee, as poſitive an Apoſtolical Inſtitution as any other Order) is to me an invincible Argument, that, ſhould there be *as good reaſon*, any other Order might be laid aſide, or Apoſtolical Inſtitution diſuſed. And in effect the Order of *Deacons* has been laid aſide; ſince nothing can be plainer, than that the Office of thoſe we now call *Deacons*, is no more the ſame with that of the Deacons inſtituted by the Apoſtles, than it is of Biſhops.

So then it appears, that in Scripture there is no Foundation for the confounding the Notions of *Legal Prieſts* and *Chriſtian Miniſters*, whoſe Offices are there deſcribed to be wholly diſtinct; and no Name given to any Officer of the *Chriſtian Church*, denotes *any Sacerdotal Power*.

Having thus examined and confuted the grand Error on which all Mr. *Law's* miſtakes are founded, and ſhewn that in Chriſtianity CHRIST alone is PRIEST, and no Man on Earth hath Title to any *Sacerdotal* Office; tho' by confounding the Notions of Legal Prieſts, and Chriſtian Miniſters, ſome Men under the pretence of a *Sacerdotal* Office, have claimed more than ever the *Legal Prieſts* had a Right to, and uſurped the *Regal* Power of Chriſt; I now proceed to examine Mr. *Laws* Letter more particularly.

After what I have premiſed, I ſhall not be afraid to own as true, what Mr. *Law*, p. 1, 2. charges on the Biſhop as His Tenet, 'that all In-'ſtitutions are to be Condemned, as *trifling*, *uſe-'leſs* and *affronting to God*, which are obſerved

in

'in any Christian Society upon this Suppositi-
'on, that thereby *Grace is Conferred* thro' Hu-
'man Hands.

If therefore the design of Confirmation be (as Mr. *Law* says, *p.* 2.) 'that it should be a means 'of *Conferring Grace* by the Prayer and Imposition of the *Bishop's* Hands, on such as have been 'already Baptized; I allow it to be trifling, useless and affronting to God.

That the Apostles laid their Hands on such as had been already Baptized, is true; but that it from thence appears (as Mr. *Law* contends, *p.* 2.) 'that something else in the Apostolical times was 'necessary besides Baptism, to qualify Men to be 'compleat Partakers of the Grace of Christ,' is not true: For by this Imposition of Hands, they did not confer the Grace of Christ, but only *extraordinary* Gifts of the Holy Ghost, for extraordinary Ends, which were confined to those miraculous times.

In modern Confirmation nothing is conferred, but only a Solemn and Publick Declaration made, that a Person now *adult* takes upon himself the Profession of Christianity, and the Obligation of the Baptismal Vow made for Him when he was an Infant, joyned with the Prayers of the Bishop and Congregation ‖ that 'God would Defend him 'with his Heavenly Grace, that he may continue 'his for ever, and daily encrease in the Holy 'Spirit more and more, till he he comes to Gods 'everlasting Kingdom.

‖ *See the Form.*

P. 5. A Biſhop therefore to whom any Perſons come for Confirmation, I think ought to tell them, 'that if they believe any Grace is conferred by the 'Impoſition of his Hands, or that their Title to 'God's Favour depends on this Act of His, or 'that there is any Virtue in the *Opus Operatum*; 'if they mean any thing more by coming for 'Confirmation, than to declare Solemnly that they 'take on themſelves the Obligation of the Baptiſ-'mal Vow made in their Names; they have a 'falſe Notion of the Deſign and Nature of the 'Inſtitution; for that he has neither Right nor 'Power, nor can have, to diſpoſe of God's Fa-'vour and Graces, but that they muſt expect them 'from God alone.

P. 6. The Effects of the Impoſition of the Apoſtles Hands were Viſible; and the conferring of the *extraordinary* Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt attending that Act, one of the *plaineſt* things in Chriſtianity. It was deſigned for a proof of the Truth of the Apoſtles Miſſion and Doctrine; and therefore may well be reckoned among the στοιχεῖα the Foundations, and made part of the λόγον τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ *the Word of the beginning of Chriſt*, *Heb.* vi. 1. 2.

But when the Viſible Effects were ceaſed, it ceaſed to be any longer a στοιχεῖον Fundamental Doctrine [not, that Extraordinary Powers *had been* conferred by the Apoſtles, which is ſtill a Fundamental Doctrine, and of great conſequence in proving the Truth of Chriſtianity, but] that there was any Virtue to the conferring of Grace in the ſame *Material* Act continued in the Church; whatever

St.

St. *Cyprian* or any other Great and Good miſtaken Men might fancy to the contrary.

P. 7. 'Tis equally an Error to ſuppoſe the Holy Ghoſt is conferred in the *Ordination* of the Chriſtian Clergy, by means of any Human Benediction, or the Impoſition of the Biſhop's Hands.

When Chriſt pronounced over the Apoſtles, the Words now uſed in our Ordinations; there were extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit conferred, of Miracles and Tongues, and Powers of Healing, *&c. Mar.* 16. 18. As this is what was meant by *Receiving the Holy Ghoſt* THEN, and 'tis plain theſe Gifts are not conferred NOW, I own my ſelf at a loſs to know what is meant by the *Receiving the Holy Ghoſt.* And if it be made a Conſequence of what I have wrote, that the *Form*, which (as Biſhop *Burnet* ſays, *p.* 9.) the Church in her beſt Times did not uſe, and has not been uſed above 500 Years, ought not NOW to be uſed; I ſhall not take upon me to ſhew the contrary.

Concerning Ordination, take the Opinion of our Great Reformer *Cranmer* in the following Words.

† 'All Miniſters be appointed, aſſigned and elect-
'ed by the Laws of Kings and Princes. In the
'admitting of many of theſe, there be divers
'comely Ceremonies and Solemnities uſed, which
'be not of Neceſſity, but only of good Order
'and Seemly Faſhion; for if ſuch Offices and Mi-
'niſtrations were committed without ſuch Solem-
'nity, they were nevertheleſs truly committed. —

† *His Anſ. to the 9th Q. in Record* 21, *Collect.* Burnets Hiſt. Ref. *Vol.* I. *p.* 220.

'There's no more promiſe of God that Grace is 'given in committing of the *Eccleſiaſtical* than '*Civil* Office. In the Apoſtles Times, when there 'were no Chriſtian Princes, by whoſe Authori-'ty Miniſters of God might be appointed, — there 'was no Remedy — but only the Conſent of 'Chriſtian Multitudes among themſelves by an uni-'form Conſent, to follow the Advice and Perſwa-'ſion of ſuch Perſons whom God had moſt endu-'ed with the Spirit and Counſel and Wiſdom. — They 'were conſtrained of Neceſſity to take ſuch Prieſts, 'as either they knew themſelves to be meet there-'unto, or as were recommended unto them by 'others ſo replete with the Spirit of God — that they 'ought even of very Conſcience to give Credit unto 'them, and accept ſuch as were preſented. And ſo 'ſometimes the Apoſtles appointed Miniſters of God's 'Word, ſometimes the People did chooſe ſuch as they 'thought meet thereunto. —— When any were ſent 'by the Apoſtles, they of their own voluntary Will 'with Thanks did accept them; * not for the Supre-'mity, Empire or Dominion, that the Apoſtles had 'over them, to *Command*; — but as good People, 'ready to Obey the *Advice* of good Counſellors. And

'† In the New Teſtament He that is appointed to 'be a Biſhop or Prieſt, needs no *Conſecration* by the 'Scripture; but Election or Appointing thereunto is 'ſufficient.

From *Confirmation* and *Ordination* Mr. *L.* proceeds *p.* 12. to the Conſecration of the *Lords Supper*; in 'which by Human Benediction the Bread and Wine 'become Means of Grace, and are made the Spiritual 'Nouriſhment of our Souls. Mr.

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* See above, *p.* 21. † *His Anſ. to* 12*th Qu.* p. 228. *of* Burnet.

Mr. *L.* frequently in his Letter inſiſts on the Sacrament's being *Means of Grace.* I ſhall here therefore, once for all, examine that Pretence; And to do it the better, ſhall endeavour to diſcover what he underſtands by the word *Grace*, and what by *being means of Grace*, which 'tis not very eaſy to do, he has wrote ſo obſcurely and confuſedly concerning them.

Sometimes he tells us the *Sacraments* (by which we generally mean the whole Act,) ſometimes the *Elements* are means of Grace; Sometimes they are means of *Grace*, ſometimes means of *Salvation.* p. 46, Channels of *Grace* and means of *Pardon* are made Synonimous; and p. 49, he has made the Sacraments means of Grace, whereby the means of Grace are obtained; which is above my capacity to underſtand. *p.* 12, He ſays 'the Bread and Wine become means of 'Grace, and 'they are converted into means of Grace 'by an Human Benediction. *p.* 24, 'The Bread and 'Wine convey Grace to the Soul. *ibid.* the efficacy of the Water in Baptiſm by which it confers Grace, is deſcribed to be 'a Power to cleanſe the Soul, or 'purify from Sin.

P. 24. The Elements or Inanimate things are means of Eternal Happineſs. *p.* 48, Grace is annexed to the Sacraments, and They are neceſſary means of Salvation. *p.* 49, Neceſſary means of Grace

From theſe Poſitions of Mr. *L.* I obſerve

1. That according to Him the Means of Grace are External things, or Material Elements, (*viz.* Water, Bread and Wine) which have Grace annexed to them, and convey it to the Soul; and have a Power to cleanſe the Soul and purify from Sin, and are neceſſary and effectual

fectual to Salvation, *p.* 21. And this not by any natural Force, *p.* 24. but they are made such by Human Benediction.

2. By means of Grace is not meant *Terms* or *Conditions* of Grace, but *Instruments conveying* Grace; *Channels*.

3. The *Use of these means* he makes a *Condition* of Grace: They are *necessary* means of Grace, which therefore cannot be had but on *Condition* of *using* these means.

4. From his promiscuous use of the Words *Grace* and *Salvation*, which yet cannot be Synonimous; I understand him, that the Elements convey *Grace* to the Soul *immediately*, and by so conveying *Grace*, are means of *Salvation*. *Grace* then must mean such a Purity and Cleanness of Soul, as renders a Man acceptable to God, and entitles him to Salvation: It must be such a Mystical efficacy infused into our Souls, as gives our internal disposition of mind, that due perfection, which fits and qualifies it to entitle us to Eternal Happiness. Therefore

5. No Internal Disposition of Mind, no cleanness or purity of heart alone, without such a superadded Efficacy or Grace, can entitle a Man to Salvation; for all the Vertue they can have for this end, must be acquired by the use of these means, and conveyed by these *Channels*. 'Tis a *sine quâ non* to Salvation, that our Souls receive some supernatural Aptitude and Qualification, by the Conveyance of an inexplicable Vertue in *Water*, *Bread*, and *Wine*. Hence follows

6. What Mr. *L.* forgets himself, and calls *p.* 45, a Romantick Doctrine; 'that God will Accept or Save none without the Human and External Acts of the Priest; who can alone give the Water, Bread, and Wine this Strange Power, to confer and convey Grace, or the due Disposition for Acceptance and Salvation. And

7.

2. Tho' it does not follow indeed, that the Priests can *Save* whom they will; for it seems some previous Dispositions are necessary, and so all on whom the Human Act is performed are not *Saved:* Yet it directly follows, that they can *Damn* whom they will, because they can withhold the *necessary* Means of Grace, without which no Man can be Saved.

I observe that *p.* 45. Mr. *L.* asks whether 'it follows from his teaching the *Validity* and Necessity 'of the Sacraments, that all are Saved, who receive 'them.' But he does not also ask whether it follows, that all are Damned who do not receive them: for That certainly does follow.

From this Explication of Mr. *L's.* Sense, (which I know not whether he will own or no, but is the only one I can understand) I remark

1. Here is an Effect ascribed to External things, or Material Elements, which they cannot have, *i. e.* purifying and cleansing, and giving a due perfection to the dispositions of the Soul. If such as the Cause is, such is the Effect, then I ask, can a Material Cause have a Spiritual Effect? Can an External thing affect the Internal State of the Mind?

What was the reason, that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats under the Jewish Dispensation, could not purify the Conscience? The same reason will prove, that Water, Bread, and Wine, can have no effect to purify the Conscience under the Gospel Dispensation.

2. This Contradicts the Notion, and Nature, and Design of a Sacrament. A Sacrament is only an outward and visible Representation of something invisible and Internal.

In the Lord's Supper, the External *Act* of Eating and Drinking is not supposed by Protestants *so* to be

be a Means of Grace ‖ as to affect the Internal State of our Souls, much leſs can the External Elements of Bread and Wine have ſuch Effect. But

The External Elements of Bread and Wine are Viſible and Outward Repreſentations of the Body and Blood of Chriſt Sacrificed for Us. The External Act of Eating and Drinking, repreſents the Application of the Merits of Chriſt's Death to our Souls.

The outward Profeſſion accompanying this Act, which qualifies us to be admitted to it, *viz.* the Profeſſion of gratefully remembring Chriſt, repreſents the Internal Faith in a Crucified Meſſiah, which qualifies Us for the Internal Application of his Atonement to our Juſtification.

'Tis the ſame in Baptiſm; where the Outward ſign, or Water, repreſents the Internal Water of Regeneration, the Holy Spirit.

The External Act of Waſhing, repreſents the Renewing of the Holy Spirit. And the External Concomitant Act of Profeſſing Chriſtianity, *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, which is the Condition of being Baptized; repreſents the Anſwer of a Good Conſcience towards God, which is the Condition of having our Souls purifyed by the Holy Ghoſt.

Now to make the Elements the *Inſtruments* of Grace, is making the Holy Ghoſt in Baptiſm unneceſſary; and giving the Office or Internal Operation, that belongs to him, to Water, of which Operation the Waſhing with Water is only an External and precarious ſign: In the Lord's Supper, 'tis giving the Merit or Efficacy of Chriſt's Body and Blood Sacrificed, to Bread and Wine, which are only Symbols and precarious Repreſentations of that Sacrifice. To

‖ *See Mr.* Burnets *Anſwer to Mr.* L's *Firſt Letter*, p. 32. 33.

To make the *Uſe* of theſe Means the *Condition* of Grace, ſets the External Act above the Internal Diſpoſition of Faith, which of itſelf will then be ineffectual and inſufficient to qualify us to receive Grace, till 'tis render'd effectual by the concurrence of the External Act; on which therefore as to any Virtue or Efficacy 'tis made to depend.

This is a Notion inconſiſtent with Scripture and Reaſon, that deſtroys the Nature of a Sacrament, and contradicts our Church particularly, which, in *Homily 1ſt*, on the Sacrament, ſays, that 'To believe in 'the Merit of Chriſt's Death, *&c.* is to ſtick faſt to 'his Promiſe in his Inſtitution, and to apply his 'Merits unto thy ſelf. Herein thou needeſt no other 'Man's help, no other *Sacrifice* or *Oblation*, no *Sacrificing Prieſt*, no *Maſs*, nor *Means* eſtabliſhed by 'Humane Inſtitution.

Our Catechiſm teaches us that a Sacrament is 'An 'Outward and Viſible Sign of an Inward and Spiri-'tual Grace given unto us, ordained by Chriſt him-'ſelf *as a Means* whereby we receive the ſame and a 'pledge to aſſure Us thereof.

The Explication of the Sacraments in our Catechiſm, is by no means accurate. For Inſtance, in the Lord's Supper, The Body and Blood of Chriſt are ſaid to be the inward and ſpiritual Grace; Which is impoſſible. The Inward and Spiritual Grace is Juſtification or Refreſhing our Souls; the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Chriſt is only the Inſtrumental Cauſe of that Juſtification. Nor can an Accurate explication of the Sacraments be expected in ſo ſhort a Compaſs. What is meant by being *a Means whereby we receive the ſame*, is not explained in the Catechiſm. I can underſtand no

more by it than that they are typical Means, or a Repreſentation of the true Means. Such is the Baptiſmal Water, of the Regenerating Spirit; with which therefore it is joyn'd, *John* iii. 5. *Tit.* iii. 5. And the Euchariſtical Bread and Wine a Repreſentation of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, of which they are call'd, 1 *Cor.* x. 16. the Communion, *i. e.* viſible Tokens of our belonging to, and Communion with Chriſt; as eating Things offered to Idols, was a viſible Token that thoſe who eat, profeſſed to belong to and worſhip thoſe falſe Deities.

Some, by the External Sign's being a means of Grace, underſtand it's being a *Motive* to us to qualify ourſelves for Grace, by putting Us in mind of the Internal Means; which as much overthrows Mr. *L*'s Notions, as my way of underſtanding it does.

Others underſtand by it, That the External Act is one Condition qualifying Us for Grace, and that becauſe 'tis a part of Chriſtian Obedience to obſerve Chriſt's Inſtitution; and Obedience and Faith are the Conditions of Grace.

But this too is as inconſiſtent with Mr, *L*'s Notion as the other.

But even allowing what is falſe and impoſſible; allowing without any Proof from Reaſon or Scripture, that the Elements really have ſuch a myſterious Energy; What reaſon or text of Scripture can Mr. *L.* produce to prove, that it muſt receive it from the Benediction of the Prieſt only? Could not Chriſt *immediately* endow them with this Power, on their being ſolemnly ſet apart by the Chriſtian Society, without the Intervention of Human Hands?

The Notion of their having ſuch a myſterious

Energy

Energy, has no Foundation in Scripture. Let Us conſider the original Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, (which as Mr. *L.* has particularly inſiſted on, ſo I ſhall content my ſelf with examining *that*, and leave You to apply what ſhall be ſaid to the *other* Sacrament,) and the End for which it was Inſtituted.

In our Catechiſm, to the Queſtion, 'Why was 'the Lord's Supper ordained?' 'tis not anſwer'd, 'To confer Grace on thoſe who receive it,' but 'For the continual Remembrance of the Sa-'crifice of the Death of Chriſt, and of the Benefits 'we receive thereby.

And this agrees exactly with the Original Inſtitution as related by the Evangeliſts and St. *Paul*.

In *Matth.* 26. 26. and *Mark* 14. 22. *&c.* it appears to have been inſtituted only for a *Viſible Repreſentation* of the New Covenant procured for Us by Chriſt's Death.

To this account nothing is added, *Luke* xxii. 19, *&c.* but that Chriſt directly commanded his Apoſtles, *Do this in Remembrance of me.* And this is the only *End* mentioned in St. *Paul*'s Account, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23—26. Inſtead of taking Notice of the *End* recorded by thoſe Inſpired Writers, who have given Us an account of the Original Inſtitution, Mr *L.* takes for granted without any proof at all, that the Bread and Wine are *converted* into Means of Grace; and on this builds his Doctrine of Human Benedictions: and ſupports it from the words of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16. *The cup of Bleſſing, which we Bleſs*, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt? The Cup, ſays he, it ſeems muſt be *bleſſed*; therefore there are *Human Benedictions* that convey Grace.

But this Argument is entirely deſtroyed, if it be conſidered, that in Scripture-Phraſe, εὐλογεῖν and εὐχαριστεῖν, to *Bleſs* and to *give Thanks* are ſynonymous. Hence in old Writers, the Lord's Supper is promiſcuouſly call'd, either εὐλογία as in this place, or εὐχαριστία the *Thankſgiving*, or as we now term it, the *Euchariſt*.

I deſire You would, (to be ſatisfied of the uſe of the Word εὐλογεῖν which is uſed by three of the *Evangeliſts*, as εὐχαριστεῖν is by all four in this Senſe) read Dr. *Whitby's* Note on *Matth.* 14. 19. which if I had room I ſhould tranſcribe here.

P. 13. Mr *L.* would make the Biſhop guilty of the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, in denying the Powers of Benediction, *&c.* to the Clergy. 'The great 'Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, ſays he, was the de-'nial of his Operation in the Miniſtry of our Savi-'our †; and how near does your Lordſhip come 'to it in denying the Operation of the ſame Spirit 'in the Miniſters whom Chriſt has ſent?

But by Mr. *L*—'s Leave, this Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt (what ever it was) was certainly ſuch an Obſtinacy as could not but be attended with Inſincerity. And muſt Men *now be* as guilty of obſtinate Infidelity and Inſincerity, as the *Jews were* in withſtanding the Holy Ghoſt bearing Witneſs, with viſible Miracles and Wonders, to the Truth of the Miſſion and Doctrine of Chriſt or his Apoſtles; muſt Men, I ſay, be as guilty as theſe *Jews were*, who cannot *now* believe, that Men neither better, nor attended with greater Aſſiſtances or Powers from

† See Dr. *Whitby's* 4th *App.* to St. *Matth.* xii. of the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which was not a Denial of his Operation in the Miniſtry of our Saviour, but of the Apoſtles after Chriſt's Aſcenſion.

from the Holy Ghoſt than themſelves, ſucceed to all the Power and Authority of the Apoſtles and Prophets; or to ſpeak the Truth, to *more* and *greater* Powers than the Apoſtles ever pretended to?

Is it ſo criminal not to believe, that Men who give no ſuch Demonſtration of a Divine Power as the Apoſtles did, are greater than the Apoſtles; or that Chriſt left ‖ His Authority with them, which He did not leave even with the Apoſtles? To what Mr. *L*— tells us in the ſame page, "That Chriſt "has promis'd that the Holy Ghoſt ſhall remain "with his Miniſters to the End of the World;" I anſwer, Chriſt ſaid indeed, *Lo, I am with you to the End of the World* (perhaps Age): And ſo He ſaid *Where two or three* (Chriſtians, not Clergy) *are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midſt of them.* And Chriſt did not fail of being preſent with the *Apoſtles* by the *extraordinary* Powers of the Spirit to the *End of the Age*, nor will He ever fail of being preſent to *all true Chriſtians* by his *ordinary* Favour and providential Protection to the *End of the World.*

Mr. *L.* goes on *p.* 14. and calls on the Biſhop for *Scripture*, *Antiquity*, *Fathers* and *Councils* to defend his Opinions.

Fathers and *Councils* are as inſignificant Trifles as humane Benedictions, when Articles of Faith are to be determin'd. *Scripture* alone is of any Authority, and alone is ſufficient, tho' *Fathers* and *Councils* were all againſt it; which they are not; but the beſt and earlieſt are for the Biſhop's Opinions. That they are founded on *Scripture*, I have endeavour'd

‖ Mr. *L*— would not have pretended to this again, as he does here and *p.* 21. if he had read Mr. *Burnet's* App. to his firſt Letter, *p.* 16, 17.

vour'd to ſhew; and expect to ſee it done to the entire Satisfaction of all reaſonable Men, when his Lordſhip comes to examine (as he has promis'd) all the Texts in Scripture relating to the Powers of the Clergy.

In Defence of his own Opinions Mr. *L—*, p. 15. quotes the following Words from the very Excellent Biſhop of *Oxford*.

"This will have no Weight with any reaſonable Men againſt the Cenſures of the Church, or "any other Ordinance of the Goſpel, that they "make the *Intervention* of *other* Men neceſſary to "Salvation, ſince it has always been GOD's ordinary Method to diſpoſe his Bleſſings and Judgments by the Hands of Men."

The *Intervention* of Men is thus far neceſſary indeed, that we could not be ſaved, unleſs we believed; nor believe, unleſs we were Preached to; nor be Preached to, unleſs the Apoſtles had been ſent for that Purpoſe. The Apoſtles *Intervention* therefore, ſo *far* was neceſſary. But for the diſpenſing Bleſſings and Judgments, whatever it might have been before, it is not ſo in Chriſtianity, in which there is properly no *Prieſt* nor *Sacrifice*, but Chriſt alone; but one *Mediator*, one *Interceſſor*, one *Bleſſer*, one *Abſolver*, one *Reconciler*.

If our *Belief* were to be determin'd by humane *Authority*, and Truth depended on the *Credit* of Perſons, the Biſhop of *Oxford* might have as much Right to be *believ'd in* as any Man: But at preſent, *Reaſon* muſt determine, and not *Authority*. Great and Good, and Wiſe, and Learned Men, may be, and have been *miſtaken*; when thoſe, who are in no reſpect equal to them, have been *in the right*.

If

If I, or any other Perſon of leſs Capacity, am perſuaded I have *Reaſon* to diſſent from any Opinion of the Biſhop of *Oxford*, he is too good a Man to deſire his *Authority* ſhould be of Force againſt *Reaſon*, or to be angry with a Man who cannot help differing from him.

Good Reaſons from a weak Man are of more Force, than weak Reaſons from a good and wiſe Man.

Mr. *L*—— *p.* 16. with the ſame *Decency* that has been obſerv'd to the Biſhop of *Bangor* throughout this whole Controverſy, compares his Lordſhip's calling *Authoritative Benediction* (what indeed it is, being a Term not found *in Scripture*, but formed *in the Schools*) *a Term of Art*, with the *Author of the Rights*, calling *Conſecration*, *Conjuration*; he charges his Lordſhip with making the Clergy *Jugglers*; and is more groſsly ſcurrilous ſtill in his Compariſon, *p.* 36. which I care not to repeat. If he thinks this way of Writing reconcileable to common *Decency*, or Chriſtian *Charity*, or that the great Names and Examples of *Sherlock* and *Snape* will bear him out in it, I envy him not his Opinion.

The Author of *the Rights*, it ſeems, ſays, "If by "Conſecration any Thing further be meant, than "applying the Bread and Wine to a holy and ſpi- "ritual Uſe, in commemorating the Benefits re- "ceived by our Saviour's Death, it may as well be "call'd Conjuration as Conſecration."

I believe, if it were propos'd that all Argu- ments *indecently* and ſcurrilouſly worded, ſhould be rejected, as of no Significancy in Controverſy; Mr. *L*—— and his Friends, would not be the laſt,

who

who would put in their Proteſt, for fear of their beſt Arguments being diſcarded.

The Reflection of the Author of *the Rights*, is *indecent*; but an indecent Expreſſion does not deſtroy a *Truth*; and the Thing he reflects on is *intolerable*. And when Men aſcribe a myſtical and ſtrange Efficacy to the Act of Conſecration, and amuſe the Underſtandings, and confound the Devotions of the People, there is great Reaſon for Oppoſition.

Our great Reformer *Cranmer*, meant nothing more by Conſecration, than applying the Bread and Wine to an holy and ſpiritual Uſe, in commemorating the Benefits receiv'd by our Saviour's Death. "As concerning the Holineſs of the Bread "and Wine, (ſays he †) how can a dumb and in-"ſenſible lifeleſs Creature receive into itſelf any "Food, or feed thereupon? No more is it poſſi-"ble that a *ſpiritleſs* Creature, ſhould receive any "*ſpiritual* Satisfaction or Holineſs; And yet I do not "utterly deprive the outward Sacraments of the "Name of *Holy Things*, becauſe of the HOLY USE "whereunto they ſerve, and not becauſe of any "*Holineſs* that lieth hid in the inſenſible Creature."

Afterwards, he *deſcribes* the Chriſtian *Euchariſt*‖, as "a Sacrifice which *doth not reconcile us* unto "God, but is made of them that be reconcil'd by "Chriſt, to teſtify our Duties unto God, and to "ſhew ourſelves thankful unto him; and therefore "they be call'd Sacrifices of Laud, and Praiſe, and "Thankſgiving — by which we offer ourſelves "unto God by Chriſt." "* If, (ſays he) only the "Death

† Defence of his Book on the Sacrament, againſt *Gardiner*, p. 3.
‖ *Pag.* 374. * Ibid. *pag.* 378.

" Death of Chriſt, be the Oblation, Sacrifice and " Price, for which our Sins be Pardon'd, then the " Act of Miniſtration of the Prieſt cannot have the " ſame Office. And again, * Chriſt made the " bloody Sacrifice which took away Sin. The " Prieſt with the Church make a Commemoration " thereof with Lauds and Thankſgivings, offering " themſelves alſo obedient to God unto Death. " And yet this our Sacrifice *taketh not* away our " Sins, nor is accepted but by his Sacrifice." Add to this, what I have cited above from the *Homilies*, p. 49.

Mr. *L*— proceeds *p.* 17. to argue for *ſacerdotal* Prayer, from the cuſtomary Viſitation of ſick People. But this is not for any peculiar Virtue in the Clergyman's Prayers as ſuch, but becauſe he is the moſt able, and 'tis his proper Employ to give ghoſtly Advice and Conſolation, to direct the Sick how to pray, and adminiſter unto him the Lord's Supper, which in an *orderly* Church muſt be done by a Clergyman.

He next contends for *ſacerdotal* Powers, particularly *Prayers* and *Benedictions*, from Inſtances taken out of the *Old Teſtament*.

I have already ſhewn, That our Clergy cannot pretend to any *ſacerdotal* Powers that the *Legal Prieſts* had, becauſe theſe had all their Completion in Chriſt, and the Clergy are not *Prieſts*. But beſides, Mr. *L*——'s chief Inſtances are taken from the Actions not of *Prieſts*, but of *Prophets*, who were very different from *Prieſts* among the *Jews*. And to plead for *ſacerdotal* Powers from the

* Ibid. 3, 8.

Actions of Perſons quite different from *Prieſts*, is very abſurd.

Mr. *L*—'s Argument from *Abraham*'s Praying for *Abimelech*, is neither more nor leſs than this:

Abraham, who was an *inſpir'd Prophet*, pray'd for *Abimelech*, becauſe he was a *Prophet*.

Therefore the uninſpir'd Chriſtian Clergy have a Right to *ſacerdotal* Powers, tho' they are neither *Prieſts* nor *Prophets*.

But it may not be amiſs to conſider this Caſe of *Abimelech* more particularly.

He ſhall pray for thee, and thou ſhalt live, are the Words.

Now ſuppoſe we allow, That *Abraham*'s *Praying* was the Condition of *Abimelech*'s *Living*: Does this properly affect *Abimelech* with regard to the Favour or Diſpleaſure of Almighty God?

'Tis *ſuch* an Effect of Prieſtly Miniſtrations, that Mr *L*— was to ſupport by his Argument from this Fact.

By the *Favour* or *Diſpleaſure* of God, I think, we mean, " An Act of God that concerns the *Eternal* " Hapineſs or Miſery of Man. "

I do not ſay, That *Temporal* Bleſſings are not Favours of God. No doubt but *they are Gifts that come of the Lord*; as Temporal Misfortunes are Plagues ſent from God: But they are ſuch Favours as God often confers on thoſe, who are far from being well-pleaſing to Him; as Temporal Misfortunes often befall thoſe, who are moſt in his Favour.

But, I ſay, by the Favour or Diſpleaſure of God, I think, is properly meant, his Determination concerning the *Eternal* Happineſs or Miſery of a Man.

And

And whatever *Temporal* Happineſs or Misfortune might do, 'tis certain *Abimelech*'s Title to the Favour or Diſpleaſure of God, in this Senſe, could not at all depend on *Abraham*'s Prayer, but only on his own Integrity.

There are many Inſtances of *Temporal* Bleſſings being confer'd by God on One for the Sake of Another. God might ſpare *Abimelech*'s Life, for *Abraham*'s Sake, as He bleſſed *Laban* for *Jacob*'s, *&c.*

But I ſhall never be perſwaded, that *Abimelech*, who had acted in the Integrity of his Heart, could want Acceptance with, and the Favour of God, tho' we could ſuppoſe he had wanted *Abraham*'s Prayers.

How far God now hears the Prayers of one Man for another in Caſes of Temporal Good or Evil, Life or Death, I determine not. *The Prayer of a righteous Man*, we know, *availeth much.* In the Beginnings of Chriſtianity, we meet with Directions for effectual Prayer for the Recovery of Sick Perſons, and the Forgiving Sins, for which their Sickneſs had been inflicted, *Jam.* v. 14. *&c.*

And tho' now that all Inſpiration and extraordinary Powers are ceas'd, we cannot have ſo much Aſſurance of the Effect of our Prayers; yet we need not doubt, that God often hears the Prayers of his faithful Servants for their Brethren, in Caſes of Temporal Bleſſings. But the Prayers of the moſt righteous Man on Earth, cannot procure what we properly call the *Favour of God*, to any One, who is not entitled to it by his own Sincerity. They may be effectual with God to the conferring all Sorts of Temporal Bleſſings, that is, ſuch as concern directly only our preſent State; and our fu-

ture State not at all, or only indirectly, and at a Diſtance.

Under ſuch *Temporal* Bleſſings, I include the *Opportunities* of knowing the Goſpel, and of Amendment and Repentance. Therefore we are to pray for all Infidels, *That it will pleaſe God to give them the Light of his Goſpel:* And for all our Enemies and Perſecutors and wicked Men, *That it would pleaſe God to give them a better Mind:* But,

1. The immediate Effects, *viz.* a better Senſe of Duty, or Conviction of the Truth of Chriſtianity, are but *Temporal* Bleſſings, and concern only a Man's *preſent* State directly.

2. The Effects of theſe *Temporal* Bleſſiugs on a Man's *future* State, is precarious, and depends on *himſelf* only. For,

3. 'Tis the *Uſe* a Man himſelf makes of them, that affects his internal State, and Title to God's Favour: And according to that *Uſe*, theſe (as all other *Temporal* Bleſſings, of Plenty and Proſperity, *&c.*) may not ſeldom encreaſe his Damnation, as well as ſecure his Happineſs. And

4. There is no Reaſon to think, the Prayers of a Clergyman (as *Such*) in this Caſe, of more Efficacy, than thoſe of a Layman. They muſt be the Prayers of a *Righteous* Man: 'Tis the internal Diſpoſition of the Mind, and not any *ſacerdotal* or aſcititious Character, that gives an Efficacy to them.

Mr. *L*—'s next Inſtance is, *Moſes*'s laying Hands on *Joſhua*, Deut. xxxiv. 9. On this I obſerve,

1. *Moſes* was no *Prieſt*; ſo this is not to the Purpoſe.

2. This

2. This was done by God's expreſs Command; *Numb.* xxvii. 18. *The Lord ſaid unto* Moſes, *Take thee* Joſhua — *a Man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine Hand upon him*, &c.

3. This was not to confer Grace; but to ſet apart to the Civil Government. And the laying on of *Moſes*'s Hands, is not here brought in as a *Cauſe* *, but as a *Sign* of *Joſhua*'s Wiſdom; for 'tis expreſsly ſaid, *Numb.* xxvii. 18, That he had the Spirit before *Moſes* laid his Hands on him, by God's Direction, to make it known that he was the Perſon appointed and fitted by God for that Employment.

What I have ſaid, may be eaſily apply'd to *Job*'s Prayer for *Eliphaz*. For the Bleſſing of the Jewiſh *Prieſts*, it concerns not Chriſtians; That it was not Authoritative, any one may ſee, who turns to the Form quoted, *Numb.* vi. 22.

Mr. *L* — *p.* 20. " leaves it to God to judge, on " what Principles or Motives the Biſhop taught his " Doctrines: " In which he does much better than his Brethren of the *Committee*, who aſſume the Power of Judging to themſelves. And he declares, " That " if he had the greateſt Hatred to Chriſtianity, he " ſhould expreſs it by teaching the ſame: and that " if he could rejoyce in the Ruin of Sinners, it " would be the greateſt Matter of Triumph to him, " to drive them from the Miniſters of God. " I, on the contrary, cannot help declaring as ſolemnly, That I think the Doctrine his Lorſhip has taught, the greateſt Honour to Chriſtanity, and that he is far from Rejoycing in the Ruin of Sinners, who exhorts them, not to neglect their Salvation and their Saviour, and

* See *Kidder* on the Place.

and pay too much Deference to the Authority of their Teachers, when they pretend to be Miniſters of God and Chriſt in a Senſe that no Men, are their Miniſters; but to have a cloſe and immediate Regard to Chriſt himſelf, (a Rule, which however lightly eſteem'd by ſome, when weighed in the Balance, will not be found wanting) without fearing Man's Judgment, or truſting to new Schemes, not taken from the Goſpel which directs to This, but from the Traditions of Men, which if ſubmitted to, make the Goſpel of none Effect,

P. 21. Mr. *L.* denies the Conſequence charg'd on his Doctrine of ſacerdotal Powers; 'That it gives 'the Clergy the arbitrary Diſpoſal of Happineſs 'to Mankind;' which yet is true, whether he ſees it or not.

'Was, ſays he, *Abimelech*'s Happineſs in *Abraham*'s 'Diſpoſition, becauſe he was to be receiv'd by means 'of *Abraham*'s Interceſſion?

I *Anſwer:* If *Abimelech*'s Happineſs was to be receiv'd by Means of *Abraham*'s Interceſſion, and no otherwiſe; and *Abraham* could chuſe whether he would intercede or no: then his Happineſs was certainly in *Abraham*'s Diſpoſition.

And ſo, if the Favour of God were to be receiv'd only by the Miniſtrations of the Clergy; and the Clergy could chuſe whether they would perform them or no; then the Favour of God would be in the Clergy's Diſpoſition.

Abraham, inded, was a good Man, and ſo could not but pray for *Abimelech* to God: But had our Clergy Spiritual Bleſſings thus in their Power, I doubt they are not all ſo good as never to abuſe their Power.

By

By the Power they assume, tho' they do not in direct Terms (for then they wou'd outdo the Papist) yet they do in effect assume to themselves a Power to *damn* the *Innocent*, and *save* the *Guilty* (tho' Mr. *L.* denies it, *p.* 21.) or else they assume nothing.

Do they assume a Power to *save* the *Innocent* and *damn* the *Guilty?* It follows that they assume also a Power to *damn* the *Innocent*, and *save* the *Guilty*. For if any *Act* of theirs *saves* the *Innocent*, the *with-holding* That Act *damns* the *Innocent*. If any *Declarations* of theirs *damn* the *Guilty*, the *with-holding* those Declarations *saves* the *Guilty*. If the *Innocent* are *saved* and the *Guilty* damned *without* their Concurrence, and often in *Contradiction* to Their Acts, who do not seldom, as far as is in their Power, *damn* the *Innocent* and *save* the *Guilty:* then 'tis *Innocence* that *saves*, and *Guilt* that *damns*. And if the *Innocence* of the *Innocent save* them *without any act* of the Clergy, 'tis in vain to pretend a Power of *Saving* those, who are already *saved* without that Power; If the *Guilt* of the *Guilty damns* them *without* any *Act* of the Clergy, 'tis in vain to pretend by Human Acts to *damn* them, who are *damn'd* already.

What a *Just Right* to Reconcile Men to God, claim'd *p.* 21. is, I know not, since all Men are as much in or out of God's Favour *without* as *with* such a Right in the Clergy. How can *Those* of them therefore be excus'd from Arrogance, who claim such Rights as God has not given them, nor can they possibly have? or who assert that none can despise them, *p.* 21. (who by such Claims render themselves truly despicable) without despising Him, who, they say, sent them; but who in truth hath not sent them with the *Powers* they claim.

According

According to Mr. *L.* the *Romiſh* Clergy have this Miſſion as much as himſelf. Does he think that any one who deſpiſes them for pretending to *Tranſubſtantiation*, deſpiſes Chriſt? Are all as ſurely out of the Covenant of Grace, who leave a *Romiſh* Paſtor thus ſent, as when they openly deſpiſe Chriſt's Sacraments? Mr. *L.* muſt thus think, or unſay what he has ſaid *p.* 21.

Such Authority as Mr. *L.* claims, the Apoſtles never had; and if they had, yet cannot our Clergy. And the Reaſon is good *p.* 23. from their being weak, frail, ſinful, paſſionate Mortals, whoſe natural Infirmities wholly diſqualify them for the Powers committed to the Apoſtles, unleſs they had ſuch ſupernatural Aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt to help their Infirmities, to guide, direct, and ſecure them from Error and Miſtakes, as the Apoſtles had.

Page 24, 25, concerning the Sacraments, have been conſider'd already. I only add;

" Glorious Means of Grace of the Sacraments, " which is only obtain'd Conditionally, on Mens " being endow'd with ſuitable Diſpoſitions of Piety " and Vertue, and that is owing to thoſe Diſpoſitions, and not the Sacraments." Mr. *L*—'s firſt *Letter*, p. 24.

In the ſame manner, on what Mr. *L*— has ſaid, *p.* 34, " That the *Apoſtolical Benedictions* of the " Biſhops or Prieſts " (who are not more *Apoſtles*, than the Apoſtles were Saviours) " effectually Miniſtring in the Conveyance of God's Graces, are ever " ratify'd in Heaven, but when we render our ſelves " in ſome reſpect or other unworthy them;" upon this (I ſay) I obſerve,

Glorious

'Glorious *Effectual* Benediction of the Prieſt, the 'Ratification or *Effect* of which, depends entirely on 'ourſelves, and is not owing to the Prieſt's Act, but 'our own Diſpoſition to receive God's Graces!'.

Mr. *L*——'s Argument, *p.* 26. is one of thoſe I ſuppoſe he will not part with, for its *Indecency*.

The Biſhop's denying Mens Salvation to depend on any particular Set of Clergy, he ſays, is juſt as right, or as wrong, as *Naaman*'s deſpiſing the Water of *Jordan*.

I anſwer; That neither Salvation, nor miraculous Cures, as *Naaman*'s, depend on *external* Means. But when God clearly (I ſay, *clearly*) reveals that he will grant a Cure on the Performance of this or that *indifferent* Action, and that perhaps to try the Faith of the Man; the refuſing to perform the Condition requir'd by God, argues Want of ſincere Faith, and That *Want* hinders the Cure.

The denying certain Claims of ſome Clergy, or that the Sacraments are *materially* Means of Grace, does not (as Mr. *L.* ſays it does, *p.* 27.) make the poſitive Inſtitutions of Chriſt Dreams and Trifles: Nor is the pretended *Succeſſion* of any Order of Clergy, a poſitive Inſtitution.

The Scripture has not made it neceſſary to the due Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, that they be done by a Perſon deriving a Commiſſion thro' an *uninterrupted* Succeſſion; (if it did, we ſhould have too much Reaſon to doubt whether they are ever duly adminiſtred;) nor does the Nature of the Act require it. But if we make nothing neceſſary but what Chriſt did, we may be ſure enough of the due Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, without ſuch a Succeſſion.

In Defence of this Commiſſion to a certain *Succeſſion*, to adminiſter Sacraments and Abſolution *effectually*, Mr. *L.* asks, *p.* 35. "Who is to receive the Bene-" fit of the Commiſſion we aſſert, but the Laity? "*Who* ſuffer, if we pretend a falſe one, but ourſelves? So *Mahomet* might have told the People, "Believe "me, that I have a Commiſſion to eſtabliſh a new "Religion. Why ſhould I impoſe on you? Who "is to receive the Benefit of it, but you? And "who will ſuffer, if I am an Impoſtor, but my-"ſelf?" But would this juſtify the People for believing *Mahomet?*

'Tis well known, *who* receive the Benefit of this pretended Commiſſion in the Church of *Rome*, The Miſery and Poverty of the Laity, the Wealth and exorbitant Grandeur of their Clergy, make it too plain.

For pretending this falſe Commiſſion, no doubt, the Pretenders will ſuffer, and give an Account for deluding the Laity. But They too muſt give an Account for ſuffering themſelves to be deluded. God will require the Blood of this People of ſuch Clergy, (as Mr. *L.* rightly obſerves *p.* 50) and yet the People muſt die in their own Sin. *See* Ezek. iii. 18, 20.

Mr. *L*— is very plentifully abuſive, *p.* 35, 36. on the Biſhop, becauſe his Doctrines agree with ſome of the Aſſertions of the Author of *the Rights*, whom, he ſays, the Biſhop has imitated in ridiculing the Divine Right of the Clergy, only that Author did it *more decently*. How unlucky was it, that in this ſcurrilouſly *indecent* Paragraph, Mr. *L*— ſhould mention *Decency?*

But be that Author what or who he will: Let his Character be that which Mr. *L* has given; and

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the View with which he wrote his Book, whatever Mr. *L.* pleaſes: Muſt not the Biſhop maintain what is true, becauſe that Author has *ſometimes* maintain'd the ſame, perhaps with different Views? Will Mr. *L.* give up the Poſitions he has maintain'd, becauſe they are, (I hope with different Views) maintained by Papiſts? If he thinks them true, he ought not; And *p.* 105, he declares, "That 'tis no Argu-"ment againſt the Neceſſity of an uninterrupted "Succeſſion, that the Papiſts contend for the ſame." (Tho' the Biſhop has plainly prov'd, that, ſuppoſing what the *Non-jurors* grant, that there is an uninterrupted Succeſſion in the Church of *Rome*, it can be only there, and not with the *Non-jurors*: And for making this Suppoſition Mr. *L.* is very merry with the Biſhop *p.* 103, 104. as if he had deny'd there were any ſuch Succeſſion *poſſible*, and yet affirmed that it *actually is* in the Church of *Rome*: Whereas 'tis impoſſible Mr. *L.* ſhould be ignorant that the Biſhop has no where aſſerted nor granted this, but only ſuppos'd it in an Argument *ad Hominem.*) If Mr. *L.* will not give up his Doctrines becauſe they are taught by Papiſts; no more ought the Biſhop to give up any fundamental Truths of Reaſon, Chriſtianity and Proteſtantiſm, becauſe any of them have been made an ill Uſe of by ſome* *Free thinking Infidel* (as Mr *L.* calls this Author,) in whom the Behaviour and Pretences of ſome of the Clergy, may have created a Disbelief and Abhorrence of the Religion their Claims diſhonour.

'Tis certain, that under the Pretence of Chriſtian Liberty, as well as any other Doctrine of Chriſtianity, very ill Deſigns may be carry'd on: St. *Peter*

* See Mr. *Barnes*'s Anſwer to Mr. *L*—'s firſt Letter. p. 4, 5.

tells us of ſome, *Who walk after the Fleſh in the Luſt of Uncleanneſs, and deſpiſe Government*, (brook not any Reſtraint, nor will be curbed by any Authority in their career of Wickedneſs) *having Eyes full of Adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from Sin*, and who, while they promiſe Men *Liberty*, make themſelves the *Servants* of Corruption.

Such as anſwer this Character, and all others who abuſe their Liberty for a Cloak of Wickedneſs, are inexcuſable and proper Objects of Church-Authority and Cenſures; And there would be much leſs occaſion to complain of the Multitudes of ſuch Men, did the Clergy exert their Authority againſt *them*, with half the Zeal they do againſt the Beſt of Men, if they differ never ſo litttle from Their Opinions, or oppoſe their abſurd Claims and uſurped Powers. Such Men as St. *Peter* deſcribes, are ſo much the more Zealouſly to be condemned, becauſe they bring a Scandal upon Chriſtian Liberty, and by their Abuſe of it make Men afraid of what is, when well uſed ſo deſireable and ornamental.

To return: Whatever the Author of the *Rights* be, or whatever were his Views, the Poſition Mr. *L.* quotes from him is certainly true, 'That Religi-'ous Offices are appropriated to particular Men, cal-'led Clergy, for Order's ſake only; and not on Ac-'count of any peculiar Spiritual Advantages, Pow-'ers or Privileges, which thoſe who are ſet apart 'for them have from Heaven.

To avoid the Anarchy and Confuſion that would ariſe in Chriſt's Kingdom and Church from ſetting up others with Regal or Sacerdotal Powers in them, beſide Chriſt the ſole King and Prieſt; 'tis aſſerted That no particular Order of Men have ſuch Powers,

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To avoid the Confuſion and Diſorder that would follow, if Chriſtians ſhould have no publick Worſhip or Aſſemblings; 'tis aſſerted, that by Conſent and Agreement of Chriſtians, ſome Men muſt be ſet apart, under whatever Denomination the Society ſhall think fit, for the Performance of Publick Offices.

Mr. *L.* now proceeds to conſider what his Lordſhip has maintained concerning *Authoritative Abſolution* in his *Preſervative*. His Lordſhip's Argument he ſtates thus, *p.* 41. 'Chriſtians have their Sins 'pardoned on certain Conditions: Fallible Men 'cannot certainly know theſe Conditions: There'fore fallible Men cannot have Authority to Ab'ſolve.' Than which I think nothing can be plainer.

This Mr. *L*—— ridicules, becauſe 'tis an Argument taken from the Nature of the Thing, and not from Scripture: And from it he takes occaſion to argue thus: 'Perſons are to be admit'ted to the Sacraments on certain Conditions: 'Fallible Men cannot tell whether they have 'theſe Conditions': Therefore fallible Men have no Authority to Adminiſter the Sacraments.

Mr. *L.* has drawn up his Argument in Form, and I in Form deny the Minor or ſecond Propoſition.

Mr. *L.* uſes the ſame Argument again, *p.* 57. and makes no difference between adminiſtring Baptiſm, and giving Abſolution.

I *Anſwer*, That tho' fallible Men cannot know whether Men have the Conditions neceſſary for the Pardon of Sins, which are inviſible to any but the Searcher of Hearts; yet they can know the Conditions that qualify a Man to be admitted to the Sacraments; which are only an *outward* Profeſſion, and

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in *outward* Behaviour ſuitable to that Profeſſion, as the Sacraments are only *outward* Signs. And as upon *outward* Profeſſion (of which *Men* are Judges) the *outward* Sacraments are adminiſtred by Men: ſo upon *inward* Sincerity (of which *God only* is Judge) *inward* Graces and Pardon of Sins are conferred by God only.

If by *Abſolution* nothing were meant but taking off the Church-Cenſures by which any one ſtood excommunicated from the Church, the Caſe would be parellel between *Baptiſm* and *Abſolution*. The Church can Judge whether a Man has the Qualifications for *outward* Communion; and if he has not, can exclude him from Communion; and again if he *outwardly* repents and amends, can re-admit him; which is all the juſtifiable *Authoritative Abſolution* I know of.

But this is the *Church*'s Abſolution, not *God*'s. 'Tis not the Remitting of *Sins*, but of the *Cenſures* of the Church. The Church can neither make nor unmake a *Sinner*, much leſs can a private Presbyter. They can be concerned only with *outward* Baptiſm and *outward* Communion; The Heart and Conſcience of Men, their Sins and their Sincerity, their Title to God's Wrath or Favour muſt be left to God alone.

Again: If by *Abſolution* were meant only a publick and ſolemn declaring in Chriſtian Worſhip, that all who live according to the Goſpel ſhall be ſaved by it; this is eaſily allowed to every Presbyter: but this is not authoritative. But when *Abſolution* is uſed to mean a human *external* Act *Effectual* to the making an *Internal* Change, to the purging the Conſcience, and waſhing away the Sin of the Soul, 'tis ſuch a Power as no Man ever had or can have.

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The *Apoſtles* had it not, nor ever pretended to it. They baptized thoſe who *outwardly* profeſſed Chriſtianity, tho' *inſincere*, as *Simon Magus* and others; and in Baptiſm conferred no Grace, but only admitted Men to the Viſible Church.

P. 43. Mr. *L.* finds fault with this Poſition 'That 'ſince the Clergy cannot prove themſelves *Apoſtles*, 'or that whatever Chriſt ſaid to the *Apoſtles* be-'longs to them, therefore they cannot prove their 'Right to this or that Power or Authority from the '*Apoſtles* having exerciſed it. (*See above*, p. 24,30.) 'For, *ſays he*, then they have no more Right to the 'Exerciſe of any part of their Office than the Laity.

I *Anſwer*, they have no more a *Divine* Right, than the Laity. All the Right they have, is from orderly Appointment, either expreſs or by tacit Conſent of the Society of Chriſtian Profeſſors to which they belong.

They have no Right of adminiſtring the Sacraments on account of being Succeſſors to the *Apoſtles*, (as Mr. *L.* thinks) who did the ſame. Chriſt has appointed ſuch Things ſhould be done among Chriſtians: but where, when, or by whom done, he has left undetermined, and to be ſettled by the Agreement of Chriſtian Profeſſors.

Errors in this matter ſprang up very *early*; Good Men were miſtaken and aſſumed ſome Powers to themſelves to which they had *no Right*; To others, to which being ſet apart by the Church they had a *Human* Right, they pretended over and above, a *Divine* Right which they had not. They did not indeed ſlight or reject their *Human* Right, as none at all, when they firſt took up the Notion of a *Divine* Right. St. *Cyprian* gives the Laity many Rights

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and Privileges that are denied them *now*. He did not confine the *Church* to the *Clergy*. But as *early* as the Notion was of a *Divine* Right of *ſucceſſive* Clergy, 'twas a *miſtake*: and its *Antiquity* cannot make it *Truth*. Thoſe who maintain'd it were *Fallible*, and this is not the only Point they were *miſtaken* in. The *Millenarian* Error is more Antient, and yet not True.

The Power exerted by the Clergy in the 2d and 3d Centuries againſt the *Quartodeciminians* and the *Rebaptizers*, is wholly unjuſtifiable: and ſo are many other Acts and Claims of early Ages: And there were not then wanting ſuch as oppoſed the Growth of ſuch exorbitant Powers; as for Inſtance, *Iræneus* did in Pope *Victor*. Soon after when the Clergy came to have more Authority and Power under Chriſtian Emperors, they began to enlarge their Claims; and the Laity (as Mr. *Hales* ſays) 'thro' 'Sloth and blind Obedience examin'd not the things 'they were taught, but like Beaſts of Burden pa-'tiently couched down, and indifferently ſubmit-'ted to whatever their Superiors laid on them.

But 'Falſe were their Claims (to uſe Mr. *L*'s. 'Words, *p.* 44.) and preſumptuous their Authori-'ty, who pretended to any Apoſtolical Powers, be-'cauſe the *Apoſtles* had them;' when they were not inſpired nor extraordinarily aſſiſted by the Holy Ghoſt, as the *Apoſtles* were.

Mr. *L.* the great Patron of Sacerdotal *Abſolution*, is himſelf aſham'd of that Romantick Doctrine, *p.* 45. and asks: "What Church of *England-Man* 'ever taught *ſuch a Neceſſity* of Abſolutions, that 'God will pardon none without them, and that 'all are pardoned who have them pronounced 'over them?

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The Papists themselves, who contend for the Efficacy of the *Opus Operatum*, in the highest Exaltations of their Power pretend not to Absolve by their *own* Authority, but by a Power *derived* from Christ: And they pretend to no force in it, unless the *material* parts of Repentance precede.

But as much as the Papists pretend to, many Protestants have also claimed; and said what in effect, tho' not in express Words, amounts to what Mr. *L.* calls Romantick Doctrine: And so has he himself.

Does Mr. *L.* think Mr. *Dodwell*, Dr. *Hicks*, Mr. *Lawrence* and Dr. *Brett* Church of *England*-Men? They have all taught it. I shall instance in Dr. *B.* who in his Sermon on Remission of Sins tells us, *p.* 33. 34. 'That Repentance and Conversion 'cannot blot out Sins, no not by the Merits of Je'sus Christ, unless applied by the Absolution of 'the Priest. And, that how well soever we may 'be qualified by them to receive a Pardon, we can'not assure our selves we are actually pardoned, 'till we are assured by the Absolution of the Priest 'as his Deputy, appointed to declare and pro'nounce this Remission of Sins in his Name. 'That at the very same time that his Ministers 'pronounce Absolution to the Penitents — *p.* 35, 'God himself actually forgives them: And that 'they have not a bare Assurance to be forgiven 'hereafter, but their Pardon is actually Sealed at 'that very time, *p.* 37; so that they have no 'more Reason to doubt of their Pardon being Seal'ed in Heaven, than if an Angel descended from 'thence to tell them so".

It may indeed be ſaid to the honour of the Church of *England*, that moſt who have taught this Romantick Doctrine openly, have either before, or after, left its Communion. And with Reaſon, for It teaches the direct contrary. In the 2d *Hom.* on Repentance it is affirmed from *Duns Scotus*, 'That *our* 'Sins *muſt be forgiven us, before we come to Confeſſi-* 'on,'' and conſequently before we receive Abſolution. 'What need we then to tell forth our Sins 'into the Ear of the Prieſt, ſince that they be al- 'ready taken away?'' Conſequently then Abſolution does not *Convey* or *Seal* the Pardon, or is *neceſſary* thereto. What follows there in Confirmation of this, confirms alſo my denial of any *proper Prieſthood*. 'Therefore St. *Ambroſe* in his 2d *Serm.* 'on the 119th. *Pſalm*, doth ſay full well. Go ſhew 'thy ſelf unto the *Prieſt*: Who is the *true Prieſt*, 'but He which is *The Prieſt* for ever, after the Or- 'der of *Melchiſedec*? Whereby this Holy Father 'doth underſtand, that both the *Prieſthood* and the 'Law being changed, we ought to acknowledge '*no other*; *none other Prieſt for deliverance from our* 'Sins, but our Saviour Chriſt Jeſus, who being So- 'vereign Biſhop, doth with the Sacrifice of his Bo- 'dy and Blood offered *once for ever* upon the *Altar of the Croſs* [*qu.* does not this refer to *Heb.* 13. 10? See *p.* 13.] moſt effectually cleanſe the Spiritual Le- 'proſie, and waſh away the Sins of all thoſe that 'with true Confeſſion of the ſame do fly unto HIM''.

But Mr. *L.* himſelf has taught That Doctrine, which he challenges to be ſhown in any Church of *England*-Man: And no doubt he thinks himſelf, and thoſe who teach this Doctrine with him, the *only* Church of *England*-Men. *P.* 21. He aſſerts 'The

'The Prieſts Adminiſtration are *neceſſary* and *ef-*
'*fectual* to the Salvation of Mankind.' And *p.* 46. 'There is a neceſſity of Receiving Abſolution 'from their Hands.' And 'the Grace of Pardon 'is annexed to the Impoſition of their Hands.' And here *p.* 45. in the very Sentence after his Challenge, He aſſerts 'the *Neceſſity* and *Validity* 'of Sacraments:' *viz.* adminiſtred by a *particular Set* of Hands, in an *uninterrupted Succeſſion.* Now if notwithſtanding the Grace of Pardon being annexed to the Impoſition of their Hands, God pardons ſome without Prieſtly Abſolution, and does not Pardon ſome who have it; then 'Glori-'ous *Neceſſity* and *Validity* of Abſolution; which 'is neither *Neceſſary*, becauſe Men may be *ſaved* '*without* it, nor *Valid*, becauſe Men may be *damn-*'*ed with* it.' It may be *detained in vain*, and ſo is not *neceſſary*, or *applied in vain*, and ſo is not *valid.* All which is owned by Mr. *L*--*p.* 51. and denied again *p.* 58. 'God, he there ſays, is o-'bliged to confer Grace by the Baptiſmal Water;' and yet he elſewhere makes the conferring of Grace depend on the Diſpoſitions of the Perſon Baptized, and be only conditional, *p.* 49. *i. e.* God *is obliged* to confer Grace, and yet he *is not obliged* to confer Grace. P. 49, the Negative is true, and *p.* 58, the Affirmative is true.

God we are told, *p.* 58. is obliged by the Abſolutions and Declarations of Men to pardon Sins, *&c*; and yet it has been owned before, 'that 'if Men are denied Admittance into the Church, 'God will notwithſtanding accept them. *p.* 51. 'and that thoſe Abſolutions, *&c.* may be in vain; 'and that their Validity does not depend on their being Inſtituted by God, (which is affirmed *p.*

58.) but on the Diſpoſitions of thoſe to whom they are applied; for 'all Men are not pardoned 'who have them pronounced over them, *p.* 45. nor 'without proper Diſpoſitions, *p.* 46. and Abſolu-'tion if withheld wrongfully, injures not the Per-'ſon who is denied it, and if given without due Diſ-'poſitions in the Penitent it avails nothing, *p.* 49.'

So then *p.* 45, 46, 49 and 51, 'tis true that God *is not obliged* to pardon Sins by Human Abſolution, becauſe 'tis an Inſtitution of his; and yet *p.* 58, 'tis true that He *is obliged*. 'Glorious Deny-'ing and Affirming the ſame Propoſition at diffe-rent times; at which I do not wonder Mr. *L*— is ſo expert, who is ſo great an Admirer of Dr. *Sherlock*. *p.* 83.

Thus what Mr. *L*— has ſaid for the neceſſity of an uninterrupted Succeſſion, he has unſaid, *p.* 49. and there made a Conceſſion that entirely and for ever overthrows all that can be ſaid for it. He asks there, 'Why muſt the Impoſition of Hands 'be the leſs neceſſary, becauſe the Grace of it is 'Conditional, and only obtained in due and pro-'per Circumſtances?' Compare this with *p.* 28. 'where he tells us, 'That the Prieſthood is a 'Grace of the Holy Ghoſt, and that this Grace 'deſcended from Man to Man, through Human 'Hands;' And *p.* 7. 'By the Impoſition of the 'Biſhop's Hands the Holy Ghoſt is ſuppoſed to 'be conferred on Perſons towards Conſecrating 'them for the Work of the Miniſtry.'

Now if this Holy Ghoſt, this Grace of the Holy Ghoſt be Conditional, and as we ſay in the Schools, *Recipitur ad modum Recipiens*; then Mr. *L*— leaves us in the utmoſt Uncertainty poſſible, Whether we have

have at present any Christian Priests, and consequently, according to him, any Christian Sacraments, any Christian Covenant, or any Hopes of Salvation; or rather, he makes it certain that we have not.

He may insist, as long as he will, on his precarious Demonstration, p. 102. that none could ever obtain Orders without Episcopal Ordination: But this will not do. For allowing it, that none ever were ordained but by one supposed to be a Bishop; this is not enough.

I am, suppose, ordained by one called a Bishop: but am I sure he was really a Bishop, ordained first and then consecrated in due and proper Circumstances, that is, internal Dispositions of Mind, invisible to human Eyes, of which neither I, nor any other Mortal can certainly judge? Could I know this, how shall I be sure that he who ordained this Bishop, Priest; and he who afterwards consecrated him Bishop, were both Bishops themselves, ordained and consecrated in due and proper Circumstances, and by Persons who had been before ordained and consecrated duly, and so up to the Apostles Times?

Again, How can I be sure I am a Christian? that the Priest who baptized me was a Priest, or himself a Christian? Into what inextricable Difficulties has Mr. *L*— brought us? I would ask him,

1. Is it not by Virtue of the Grace conferred by Imposition of Hands, that, according to him, the Clergy have a Right to the effectual Administration of Sacraments and Absolution?

2. Is not the receiving this Grace by the Imposition of Hands, conditional?

3. Are

3. Are not the Conditions invisible to human Eyes?

4. Can we therefore be certain any one is ordained or consecrated with them?

5. Are we not morally certain, that there are, and must have been some ordained or consecrated without them?

6. Had these any Grace conferred on them?

7. Had they any Right to the effectual Administration of the Sacraments or Absolution?

8. Could they confer any Grace on others?

9. How then can we distinguish who are true Priests, *&c.* and who not? And,

10. Since 'tis morally certain, that between the Apostles and our Times, there have been many such faulty Links in the *Chain* of Succession, How can we be sure we have any Priests at all now? Does not this entirely destroy the Pretence to an uninterrupted Conveyance of the Grace of Priesthood down from the Apostles?

P. 50. Mr. *L*— endeavours to obviate the Objection, 'That such a Doctrine gratifies the Pride 'of Clergymen, and encourages them to lord it 'over the Flock of Christ, and is very liable to be 'abused by their Ignorance or Passions.

This he denies; 'Suppose indeed, says he, an 'Atheist or Deist were in Orders [a mighty impossible Supposition truly] he might be arrogant 'and domineer.' But, alas! the Clergy cannot be supposed to be arrogant and domineer: there are no Atheists nor Deists among them, nor any that have little Religion enough to abuse their pretended Powers. There are no such Things as Inquisitions, and Gallies, and Racks, and Goals, and Dungeons, but only some designing Atheists have made the World believe such Romantick

Stories

Stories! The *French* and *Iriſh* Maſſacres are all rank Lyes! All the Perſecutions that Hiſtory tells us ſome Clergy have raiſed againſt better Men than themſelves, all the Records of Fulminations and Excommunications of the Pope againſt our Church, all the *Smithfield* Legends, are only Inventions forged and contrived by ſome who hate the Clergy; and never were in Fact! For what Paſtor ever fleeced his Flock, or refuſed to lead them to wholeſome Paſture, or ever denied them his Sacerdotal *Ite Domum ſaturi?* 'Or who was 'ever ſo inconſiderate, as not to reflect, that if his 'Flock *fell thro'* his Offence [the Abuſe of Sacerdo-'tal Powers in the Clergy, it ſeems, affects the eter-'nal State of the Laity,] their Bloood would be re-'quired at his Hands? ſee above, *P.* 66.

In Fact, Experience, the beſt Argument, ſhews us that where-ever theſe extravagant Powers of the Clergy have *prevailed*, they have been, and are always *abuſed*. The Ignorance and Paſſion of too many in the uſe of them, much endangers the Salvation of the Laity, and their own Souls. How much more happy would both Clergy and Laity be, where no ſuch Powers are claimed, or ſubmitted to?

From hence to *P.* 56. I meet only low Cavils againſt the Biſhop's affirming, *P.* 95 *of his Pref.* 'That the Apoſtles might poſſibly underſtand the 'Power of retaining and remitting Sins, to be 'the ſame with that of laying their Hands on the 'Sick, to which a miraculous Recovery was pro-'miſed.

Mr. *L*— has wilfully repreſented (if it were poſſible, I would ſuppoſe that he had only miſtaken) the Biſhop's Meaning, when he fathers on him

him his own absurd Comment on the Words, *Whosoever Sins ye remit*, &c.

His Wit in making the Church a peculiar Society of healthful People, is below all Notice.

According to what I take the Bishop's Sense, I thus comment on the Words, *John* xx. 21. *&c.*

'I now send you to preach and establish my 'Church and Religion, and make known to the 'World the Terms of Salvation procured for them 'by my Death and Resurrection. I give you the 'Holy Ghost, and extraordinary Powers as Cre-'dentials to confirm the Truth of your Mission 'and your Message. You are enabled to cast out 'Devils, heal Diseases, *&c.* And whenever you 'heal any Diseases inflicted for Sin upon the Faith 'and Repentance of the infirm Sinner, and his 'Conversion to Christianity; this Power of yours 'shall be a certain Sign that the Sin for which the 'Disease was inflicted is forgiven, on believing your 'Doctrine. By which its excellency is demonstra-'ted. On the contrary, those who will not at-'tend to your Doctrine, nor repent of the Sins 'for which their Diseases were inflicted, shall not 'be cured by you, nor have their Sins forgiven in 'Heaven."

Mr. *L*— may be as witty as he pleases, but this will still be a very possible Interpretation. See above, *P.* 27, 28, 29.

The Commission to St. *Peter* was not mentioned nor could be meant in the Passage quoted from the Bishop, whose Words are *Remitting* and *Retaining*, not *Binding* and *Loosing* as in this Commission which was given at a different Time, on a different Occasion, and in different Words from that the Bishop

refers

refers to. So that all Mr. *L*—'s Wit in this Text is beſide the Purpoſe.

The next 13 Pages from 58 to 70 are a true Specimen of Zeal without Charity. His Lordſhip has often, and will again, I fear, often have Occaſion to forgive ſuch Uſage.

He is charged over and over again with denying a Thing for no other Reaſon, but becauſe Chriſt had aſſerted it: 'If Chriſt (ſays Mr. *L*—) would 'have ſatisfied your Lordſhip he had Power, 'he muſt have told you he had none, and then 'poſſibly you would have taught us he had. p. 59, 60. He goes on to charge him with making Chriſt a King and no King, a mere Creature, 'too 'like (ſay he *p.* 62.) the Inſult and deſigned Sarcaſm 'of the * *Jews*, who, when they nailed him to the 'Croſs, wrote over his Head, *This is the King of 'the* Jews". Such is Mr. L----'s due Regard to his Lordſhip's Epiſcopal Character. He charges him with denying Chriſt's Divinity, p. 65. with Prevarication, and againſt his Conſcience declaring his Aſſent and Conſent to the Doctrines of the Church of *England*, p. 70. and other things too ſhocking and long to be repeated.

Like this has been the Carriage of moſt of his Lordſhip's Adverſaries, who is, I doubt not, leſs concerned on his own, than on Their Account for the Injury.

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* *Angry Men are apt to blunder. It ſhould have been not the* Jews *but* Pilate, *who put this Inſcription on the Croſs, in Oppoſition to the Requeſt of the* Jews.

But why have they been ſo Zealous to faſten on him the Imputation of denying *Chriſt's Divinity*, particularly?

Thus Mr. *L*— here, and Dr. *Snape* in his ſecond Letter, pag. 48. charges him with denying Chriſt's Omniſcience and Omnipotence. And Dr. *Sherlock* in his Anſwer to a Letter, p. 19. is angry with his ſaying, *Chriſt thought*, *Chriſt was far from thinking*, as Phraſes derogating from his *Divinity*. To *Think*, according to Dr. *Sherlock*, derogates from *Divinity*.

Why, I ſay, all this; unleſs to put the World in Mind that the Perſons who now ſo zealouſly perſecute the Biſhop, not many Years ſince, with the ſame Rage, and the ſame Uncharitableneſs, purſued the Ruin, and by the ſame Unchriſtian Methods endeavoured to deſtroy the Reputation of one of the moſt Learned, and Vertuous, and Beſt of their Brethren; only for his good and uſeful Attempt to render the Doctrines of the Trinity and *Chriſt*'s Divinity, *intellegible*?

*Dr Sam. Clarke

By this Means they knew Religion would become eaſy and familiar; and it would be more difficult for them to keep the People in Blind Obedience and Superſtitious Slavery, and to obtain any unjuſt Power and Authority over the Faith and Conſciences of Men. While there are in Chriſtianity Doctrines *unintellegible*, and, though not found in Scripture, required to be believed on *Humane Authority*; 'tis eaſy for them to preſerve their Empire over the Reaſon and Underſtandings of their Fellow-Chriſtians. While Religion is made too much a *Myſtery*, and like the old Theology of the Heathens, ſuppoſed not to be underſtood by any

any but Perſons of Learning and Authority; this Artifice will ſecure ſuch a Veneration and Regard for Human Authority in Religion, as in the Day-light of Chriſtianity Men would not dare pretend to.

This theſe Men knew; and therefore by their Out-cries and Clamours, Calumnies and Defamations, and all the Engines of Authority, they tried to make it believed, that the worthy Perſon who has endeavoured to reſcue Chriſtianity from their Hands, to ſtrip it of their human Additions, and ſet it up to be Viewed by All in its native Beauty and Purity, Lovely as it is; has denied the Trinity and Godhead of our Saviour.

Few were the Attempts they made by Argument to confute his Doctrine, and all in vain. He has denied no Trinity, but what is a Contradiction to Scripture and the common Reaſon and Senſe of Mankind; nor any Divinity of Chriſt, but what is inconſiſtent with the Supremacy of the Almighty Father.

But when all others are ineffectual, Authority is an Argument that never fails.

In the ſame manner the ſame Perſons now endeavour to fix the Odium of denying our Saviour's Divinity, on his Lordſhip. And though he has wrote nothing on that Point, or by which it can be known whether he agrees with the Opinion of the excellent Perſon I have been ſpeaking of, concerning the Godhead of our Saviour; yet it ſhould ſeem they are perſuaded every Man of a clear Head and ſtrong Reaſon, and who directs his Faith more by *Evidence* than *Authority*, muſt be ſo; and accordingly proceed againſt his Lordſhip as convict.

But I return to examine Mr. *L*—'s Accuſation. The Paragraph on which it is grounded, is this,

Preſerv. p. 94, 95.

'If we look back on our Saviour himſelf, we 'ſhall find that when he declares the *Son of Man* 'had Power upon Earth to forgive Sins; even he 'himſelf either meant by it the Power of a mira-'culous releaſing the Man from his Affliction, '(which was looked upon as the Puniſhment of 'Sin;) Or, if it related to another more ſpiritual 'Senſe of the Word, the Power of declaring only 'that the Man's Sins were forgiven by God. By 'his ſupernatural Knowledge (not that which be-'longed to him as he was a mere Man) he knew 'that God was going to ſhew Mercy to the Man. 'But his Way of Expreſſion was, Thy Sins are 'forgiven thee. This was plainly to acknowledge 'and keep up the true Notion that God alone for-'giveth Sins; and our Saviour knowing the Caſe 'of the Man there ſpoken to, aſſured him of God's 'Forgiveneſs. His Sins, were forgiven by God. 'And the *Son of Man*'s Power to forgive Sins up-'on Earth, was plainly to declare This to him, of 'whom he knew it to be certainly and infallibly 'true. And ſo to any others. This aroſe, you ſee, 'wholly from his infallible Knowledge of the Will 'of God, with Reſpect to that particular Perſon; 'and could have no Place in our Lord himſelf, 'had he been a meer Man without any infallible 'Knowledge in himſelf, or Communication of 'Knowledge from God concerning his Will and 'Favour to this Man or to other Men."

This is the whole Sentence, of which Mr. *L.* has taken juſt as much as he thought he could moſt eaſily miſrepreſent.

And in this I do not ſee how he denies Chriſt's *Divinity*, unleſs affirming he was a *Man at all* is ſo.

His

His Lordſhip does not deny Chriſt's Power to Forgive Sins *as God*, but as he is the *Son of Man*. He does not deny Chriſt's *Divinity*, becauſe neither is it mentioned in the place of Scripture referred to, nor by his Lordſhip.

I hope it will be allowed, the Biſhop may deny ſome Powers to Chriſt *as the Son of Man*, without denying them to him *as God*. The Scriptures affirm, that God highly *exalted the Son of Man*, and gave him all Power, *becauſe* he became Obedient unto the Death of the Croſs, *Phil.* 2. 9, 10; and that, as a Reward of his Sufferings, he committed all Judgment to, and Ordained *That Man* to Judge the World in Righteouſneſs, *Acts* 17. 31. And if theſe Powers were given the *Son of Man* as Rewards of his Suffering, then he had them not before he ſuffered. The Biſhop may therefore ſay ſome things of Chriſt *in his State of Humiliation*, inconſiſtent with what the Apoſtles ſay of him *in his State of Exaltation*, without contradicting the *Apoſtles*.

Chriſt *in his State of Humiliation* as *Son of Man*, had not Power in his own Perſon to forgive Sins; but only by Infallible Knowledge to declare them Forgiven by God. But Chriſt *as God*, *exalted* to the Right Hand of God, and having received full Poſſeſſion of his Kingdom, has this Power; and the Biſhop never denied it.

From *p.* 70 to 77, Mr. *L*--- Cavils againſt the Biſhop's Unanſwerable Demonſtration; that a Notion which condemns Men which ever way they Act, is too Abſurd to be true. Unanſwerable, I ſay; For are not God's Ways equal? Or is he a Being of Humour and Caprice? Is he a Reſpec-

ter

ter of Perſons? Or is not every one in every Nation, who feareth God and worketh Righteouſneſs, accepted of him? And what is it to Fear God and work Righteouſneſs; but to indeavour to know God's Will and do it? and for fear of Diſpleaſing him, to Live and Act in every thing according to the Dictates of their beſt informed Conſciences?

God requires of a Man according to that which he hath, and not according to that which he hath not. To whom God has given much, of him he will require much; and to whom he has given little, of him he will exact the leſs: But of no Man does he require what he never gave.

If he never gave a Man an Opportunity to know and believe the Chriſtian Religion, of that Man he does not require to be a Chriſtian.

God has not created all Men exactly alike, nor was he obliged ſo to do. To ſome he hath given more, to ſome fewer, Perſonal Excellencies and natural Abilities; to ſome more, to ſome fewer Opportunities: But, the different Excellencies, and different Opportunities of Men conſidered, equal Favour muſt follow every equal degree of Sincerity: Elſe how are God's Ways equal? Or how is it true that he is not a Reſpecter of Perſons?

I affirm therefore, that in *Jew*, *Turk*, *Heretick*, *Schiſmatick* and *Papiſt*, as well as *Proteſtants*, their *different* Perſonal Excellencies and Opportunities allowed for, a *proportionable* degree of God's Favour, will follow every equal degree of Sincerity. But it does not follow that an exactly equal Reward to Men of *different* Excellencies and Opportunities, is what is meant by an equal degree of God's Favour; but

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a Reward proportionate to the Excellencies and Opportunities of each.

A Prince equally favours all his Subjects, great and ſmall, of little or great Capacities to ſerve him; or in Poſts more or leſs Honourable, *&c.* but to a Perſon of Great Capacity, and another of a Little one, who ſerve him with equal Sincerity and Fidelity, the ſame Reward or Honour is not an equal degree of Favour. For one who ſerves his Prince Courageouſly and to the beſt of his Skill as a Common Soldier, to be advanced to the Poſt of a Captain, is a great degree of Favour: But is the Addition of a Captain's Pay, an equal degree of Favour to a Colonel, who ſerves his Prince with equal Courage and to the beſt of his Skill in that Capacity?

So God, ſuppoſe, has given a *Chriſtian* Ten Talents, a *Jew* Five, a *Turk* Three, another Two, another One. If theſe with equal Induſtry and Sincerity fear God and work Righteouſneſs, and improve their Talents, a *proportionable* degree of God's Favour will attend them all. But then the ſame Reward given to him who has improved Ten Talents, and to him who has improved but One; is not an equal Diſtribution of Favour. Suppoſe the Favour to be the Addition of one Talent: This to him who had improved but One, is a ten times greater degree of Favour, than to him who had improved Ten.

And now it will not be difficult to anſwer Mr. L—'s only material Objection againſt the Biſhops Demonſtration; *viz.* that it ſets all Religions and Perſuaſions on a Level, ſo they be but attended with an equal degree of Sincerity.

For

For tho' it would be unequal in God not *proportionably* to favour all his Rational Creatures equally sincere; yet he was no more obliged to create them all in equal Circumstances at first, than he was to create them all Angels; but he has given Men different Talents at first, and afterwards proportional Rewards for the equal improvement of them.

Is any Man a *Christian*? 'Tis his peculiar Happiness above Men of all other Religions, that he has the greatest share of Talents; and if he improves them equally, shall have a greater Reward than Men of other Religions, who yet shall not lose their Reward if they improve their Talents: And to all Reasonable Creatures God has given some Talents, (for such is Reason it self:) If he had not, such Creatures would not be Reasonable nor Moral Agents, nor accountable Beings; neither Capable of Sincerity nor Insincerity, and therefre neither of Rewards nor Punishments.

This then is far from making all Religons equal, or setting Christianity as low as Heathenism.

And for the different methods of Christian Professors, a method of greater Purity and Internal Excellency is a greater Blessing and Talent; and for the Improvement of it, the Reward shall be proportionable. But sincere Professors of every Profession shall be rewarded according to their Sincerity.

P. 75, 76. Mr. L—says, that according to the Bishops way of Reasoning, it may be demonstrated there is no such thing as Co lour, because all Men cannot see.

This is a very perverse Cavil against so plain a Demonstration as his Lordships. He does not say there is no such thing as Truth, because all Men cannot

cannot ſee it; but only that the ſeeing ſuch Truths, cannot be neceſſary to Salvation, as all Men cannot ſee. And ſo in the caſe of Colours, 'tis abſurd to ſuppoſe God ſhou'd make it neceſſary to Salvation to believe or know what Colours are; and yet not have given ſome Men Eyes or other Faculties, by which this is poſſible to them.

The Biſhop has ſhewn in his Anſwer to the Committee, that he does not deny the Truth or Excellency of one Communion above another, but ſuppoſes it; elſe what Room is there for Choice at all? But he denies that it is neceſſary to Salvation, that Men be all in the one beſt and moſt excellent Method; becauſe this is impoſſible.

To ridicule the Biſhop's Principles, Mr. *L*— undertakes from *p.* 77, to 82, to ſhew how abſurd it wou'd be for his Lordſhip upon thoſe Principles, to endeavour to convert a *Jew*, or *Quaker*.

To do this, he firſt lays down Nine Preliminary Propoſitions, which he calls the Biſhops Principles, and by which the Biſhop is to be tryed: But I except againſt the Evidence of two of them, the Fifth and the Seventh, which do not belong to the Biſhop; but are ſuborned by Mr. *L*— to give falſe Witneſs.

'The Fifth is, that there is no ſuch thing as any 'real Excellency in any Religion, that can juſtify 'our adhering to it; but that all is founded in our 'Perſonal Perſuaſion, and, *according to that, is 'right or wrong*.

The Biſhop has himſelf ſhewn this Propoſition to be none of His. I refer you to 19, 20, 21, Sections of his firſt Chapter, in Anſwer to the Committee; where this diſpute concerning Sincerity, is

ſo clearly ſtated and determined, that nothing more ſeems to be neceſſary.

The Seventh Propoſition is, 'That as Chriſt's 'Kingdom is not of this World; ſo when worldly 'Encouragements are annexed to it, theſe are ſo 'many *Deciſions againſt Chriſt and his expreſs* 'Word.' For this, *Serm. p.* 11. is quoted, but it ſhould be *p.* 23; where his Lordſhip ſays, 'When you ſee this, [*i. e.* that there is nothing 'in the Doctrine about Chriſt's Kingdom, of 'taking in the Concerns of this World; no Com-'mands that the Frowns of the preſent State 'ſhould attend on Conſcience; no Rules againſt 'the Enquiry of All into the Original Meſſage; 'no Orders for Charitable Force; no calling on 'the Secular Arm to back Chriſt's Spiritual Autho-'rity:] When you ſee this from the whole Tenor 'of the Goſpel, ſo vaſtly oppoſite to many, who 'take his Name into their Mouths; the Queſtion 'with you ought to be, whether he did not 'know the Nature of his own Kingdom, better 'than any ſince? Whether he left any ſuch things '*to be decided againſt Himſelf, and his own expreſs* '*Profeſſion?*

Here now is not a Word to prove that Worldly Encouragements are ſo many Deciſions againſt Chriſt: (as Mr. *L*—— tells us:) But only, that to Decide that the Concerns of this World ought to be taken into Chriſt's Religion; that the Frowns of the preſent State are to attend on Conſcience; that all are not to enquire into the Original Meſſage; that Charitable Force is to be uſed, and the Secular Arm called in to back Chriſt's Spiritual Authority; is to decide theſe Matters againſt Chriſt

Chriſt and his own expreſs Profeſſion, as appears from the whole Tenor of the *New Teſtament*.

Are theſe Propoſitions the ſame: 'Wordly Encouragements, are Deciſions againſt Chriſt.' *And*, 'to decide that the Concerns of this World ought 'to be taken into Chriſt's Religion, *&c.* is to de-'cide againſt Chriſt? He muſt wink hard, that 'does not ſee the difference,

If his Lordſhip were in the wrong, he might be confuted without being thus miſrepreſented. Mr. *L*—— doubtleſs did not miſrepreſent the Biſhop purely for the ſake of miſrepreſenting him; but would have been glad it had not been neceſſary for his Deſign, and that Truth would have ſerved his turn. For without ſome *Good End* to juſtify the Means, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe he would not have ſo confidently affirmed a downright Untruth, 'that theſe Propoſitions are expreſſed in his 'Lordſhip's own Terms, without exaggeration.

Let us now proceed to the Conference with the *Few*.

If he be told Chriſtianity is neceſſary to Salvation; it ſeems he muſt ſtop the Biſhop's Mouth, by telling him that a Man is in the Favour of God, not merely for being in this or that particular Method; but purely for being Sincere in it.

Might I repreſent his Lordſhip, I ſhould reply to the *Few*, 'That to his being ſincere in his own 'Method, it was requiſite that he ſhould be fully 'and ſincerely *perſuaded it was the Beſt*: That he 'ſhould have freed himſelf as much as was 'in his Power from Prepoſſeſſion, and have done 'his beſt Endeavours to ſatisfy himſelf, whether 'any other Method were more agreeable to the

'Will of God or no. If he *had so* done and made 'the *Beſt Choice* he could, he had done all that 'Man could do. That we Chriſtians were firmly 'perſwaded our Religion was the Beſt: And as 'that Perſuaſion was the only Juſtification for our 'being Chriſtians; ſo if he were firmly perſua-'ded his Method was beſt, he was equally juſtified 'for being a *Jew*: and we doubted not but he would 'be accepted by God, whom we did not look on 'as an *Egyptian* Task-maſter, but a Gracious Lord, 'whoſe Mercy is over all his Works: But ſtill he 'muſt tell him, that though we thought he had a 'a Title to God's Mercy, he had not to the exceed-'ing great Reward promiſed to Chriſtians; and 'therefore wiſhed he could be convinced of the 'greater excellency of our Method; But if he '*could not*, we had juſter Notions of God than to 'think he could be diſpleaſed with any of his 'Creatures, for not doing what was impoſſi-'ble.'

Mr. *L*.— puts into the *Jews* Mouth, this Objection. 'His Lordſhip does not believe Chriſt is 'come, becauſe he is actually come, but becauſe 'he thinks ſo; ſo the *Jew* does not disbelieve 'Chriſt, becauſe he is not actually come, but be-'cauſe he thinks ſo.' Ridiculous! What Diverſion has it been to his Lordſhip's Adverſaries, to invent the ſilliest Things they poſſibly can, and then faſten them on his Lordſhip? Can Mr. *L*--- prevaricate ſo groſly here, and yet expect to be thought in earneſt when he declares againſt Prevarication, *p.* 70?

Had Mr. *L*--- repreſented what he knew to be the Biſhop's Senſe, 'that he was not juſtified for be-

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ing a Chriſtian, becauſe Chriſt was come merely, but becauſe he ſincerely believed he was come; he ſaw there was nothing ſilly in this, no room for him to be Witty: And that it would certainly and truly follow, that if a *Jew* was *fully perſwaded* he was not come, he could not be juſtified for being a Chriſtian, tho' Chriſt was actually come, becauſe he would act againſt his Conſcience; and that therefore he muſt be juſtified for in continuing a *Jew*, in which he acted according to his Conſcience, notwithſtanding that Chriſt was come. If this were not true, he could not be juſtified at all.

The Way therefore a Man of the Biſhop's Principles would take to convince a *Jew*, would be to demonſtrate to his Reaſon, that Chriſt did come into the World to ſave Sinners, and give us a more perfect Religion, and was the *Meſſiah* propheſied of in the *Old Teſtament*. And this would be a more likely way to convince a *Jew*, than to tell him, 'That God was not pleaſed with a Man's acting 'according to his ſincere Perſuaſion, but with his 'being in the one beſt Way; and that he muſt 'take our Words for it, that ours is that one beſt 'Way; that God confers all his Graces by our 'Hands, and that all who do not come to Us, 'have no Title to his Favour; that 'tis no matter 'whether he is perſuaded *Chriſt* was the *Meſſiah* or 'no; for ſince 'tis true in Fact that he was ſo, that 'will juſtify him for being a Chriſtian.

Is it a proper Way to convince a *Jew*, to tell him that Salvation is not to be the Reward of Faith and Honeſty, but merely of profeſſing Chriſtianity?

We come now to the *Quaker*. If I were to undertake to convince one, it certainly would be by

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endeavouring to prove to him, that our Method of Worſhip is really more excellent than his; and not by telling him, 'that by being in our Method without a firm Perſuaſion that 'tis the Beſt, ſince it actually is the Beſt, his Salvation would be more ſecure, 'than by continuing in his own, which he is 'throughly perſuaded is better than ours.'

A *Quaker* truly Conſcientious and Sincere, is in no Danger of not being accepted of God; tho' he may not be entitled to ſo great a degree of Reward as other Chriſtians, who have more Talents to improve.

'Tis moſt certain, the Truth of any Doctrine, or Excellency of any Communion, will not juſtify the Profeſſors of it without their perſonal Perſuaſion. A Man may profeſs a Doctrine really true, and yet his Profeſſion be unjuſtifiable, becauſe he is not perſuaded 'tis true. But as ſoon as he becomes perſuaded 'tis true, he is juſtified. Nothing can be plainer now, than that 'tis his Perſuaſion, and not the real Truth of the Doctrine, that juſtifies him for profeſſing it. And if in this Caſe ſincere Perſuaſion alone juſtifies a Man, what Reaſon can be given why the ſame ſhould not in another, and ſo in all?

Men are obliged to be ſincere in their Perſuaſion, *i. e.* ſincerely to have examined which Doctrine is true, and which Communion moſt excellent.

And on a ſincere Examination, no doubt the moſt excellent Method will have the greateſt Advantage: For eaſily will Truth manifeſt it ſelf, and outſhine Error to a ſincere Examiner, who ſeeks for Truth in the Love of Truth, and is always ready to change his Sentiments and Method on being convinced they are not the Beſt. All

All a Conſcientious Perſon has to do, is to examine his own Conſcience, and the Grounds on which he prefers his own Method to others. The only ſafe Ground is a ſincere Perſuaſion of the Excellency of the Method he is in, above any others he has had an Opportunity to examine into. If a *Quaker* is ſo ſincerely perſuaded, he is in no Danger. But if either *Quaker* or Church of *England-Man* believe their own Method is not the Beſt, or have never ſatisfied their Conſciences about it; the Excellency of the Method makes no Difference, they are both equally condemned for want of Sincerity.

The *Quaker*'s Religion Mr. *L*—— ſays, *p.* 80. is condemned by the Univerſal Church.

There is a great Difference between a Religion or Methods being *condemned*, i. e. ſo that all who are in it, however ſincere, are declared to be out of the Covenant of Grace; and its being *Judged Erroneous.*

The *Quakers* are not in the firſt Senſe *condemned* by the Univerſal Church. But it would be very proper to urge to a *Quaker*, as a ſtrong Motive to induce him to diſtruſt and examine more narrowly ſome things he believes; becauſe they appear to have been disbelieved, and *judged erroneous* by the Univerſal Church.

But ſuppoſe a *Quaker* is not perſuaded this is true; or if it be, that yet he has Scripture on his Side: what muſt be done?

Why, Mr. *L*—— ſeems to make the laſt Reſort of Argument to be, to tell him, that he ought to conform to the *Church eſtabliſhed* by the Laws of the Land.

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If the *Quaker* ſhould anſwer, that this is not the Doctrine of *Chriſt* but *Pythagoras*, whoſe Golden Rule 'tis.

Ἀθανάτους μὲν πρῶτα θεοὺς, νόμῳ ὡς διάκειται,
Τίμα——

The Immortal Gods Eſtabliſhed by Law,
First Worſhip——

and that this ſets all Religions on a Level; and would as much oblige him to worſhip the *Sun*, and *Mango Copac* with his Wife *Coya Mama* in *Peru*, as to be a Church of *England-Man* in *England*: I do not ſee what Mr. *L*— could reply.

And now I am inclined to think 'tis demonſtrated, the Chriſtian Religion may have great Advantages over all others; and yet in every Religion an equal degree of Sincerity, be followed by a *proportionable* ſhare of God's Favour: That the Biſhops Principles do give a great Advantage to One Church above another; and yet, as in the *beſt* Church a Man is ſaved only for his Sincerity, ſo in the *worſt*, a Man of Sincerity cannot fail of the Mercy of God.

By theſe Reflections I my ſelf am convinced the Biſhop's Notions are not (as Mr. *L*— ſays in his Title Page) deſtructive of every Inſtitution in the Chriſtian Religion, but eſtabliſh them on their true Foundation: and deſtroy only the unneceſſary Inſtitutions and Traditions of Men, inconſiſtent with Reaſon, Chriſtianity, and the Principles of Proteſtantiſm and the Reformation.

I am, Sir,

Jan. 25. 1717-8.

Your Sincere Servant,

Phileleutherus.

FINIS.